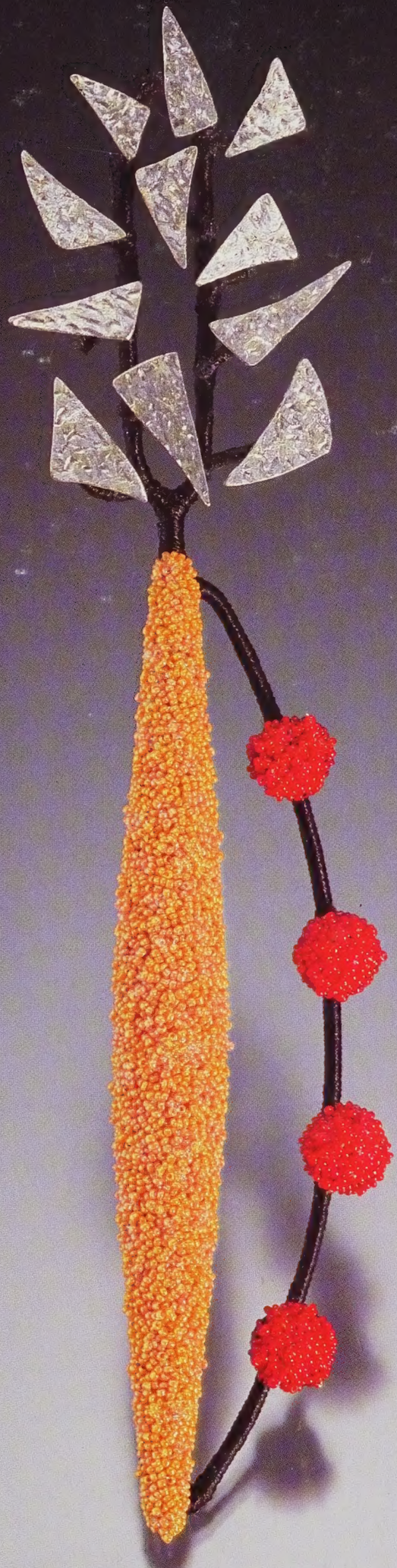

Metalsmith

1994 EXHIBITION IN PRINT

$9.50 USA
$11.00 Canada

Claire Sanford
Arching Green Pitchers, 1993
patinated copper
17½"h.
See page 9

Metalsmith

1994 EXHIBITION IN PRINT

As members of the Editorial Advisory Committee, and jurors of the *1994 Exhibition in Print,* it gives use great pleasure to present this special issue of *Metalsmith.* We feel that it succeeds in its mission of providing additional coverage of the wide range of excellent work being done in our field today, and hope you share our enthusiasm for the accomplished and innovative work presented.

624 metalsmiths responded to our call for entries, and we spent two days looking at more than 3000 slides. We congratulate everyone whose work was selected, and thank them for their participation. We would also like to thank all those who entered slides and who are not included, and assure you that we were distressed that so much meritorious work had to be eliminated simply because of space. This is only some of the best work that was submitted. We could have made an entirely different selection which would have equaled the quality of work you see here. We requested permission of entrants to keep all slides. These will be used by the Editor and Editorial Advisory Committee as a visual database for future research, potential articles and of course, images.

All work submitted was considered. We did not try to delineate "metalsmithing" and our selection represents a broad definition. Some work is related not by being metal, but by its references to process, to function, to a way of working or even to a metalsmithing 'mentality' or state of mind.

As jurors, we were drawn to slides that presented work in strong graphic images. We looked for work that appeared original, innovative and well made. Our choices reveal that we preferred work that was conceptually interesting; work that involved ideas and social issues. We were attracted to and chose work that was beautiful, but we tried to avoid being seduced by work that relied heavily on the beauty inherent in precious materials. While slides were organized in the categories listed in the prospectus (hollowware, sculpture, one-of-a-kind jewelry, etc.), we didn't select work by type or devise quotas. We did not have an agenda or preconceived notion of what would be submitted or what we would choose, and the final selection was not one that any one of us, as an individual juror, would have made. But at the end, when we put all the work together, we were all very pleasantly surprised.

Looking at so many images was overwhelming. We realized, even during the process of jurying, that some very interesting, quiet, subtle and perhaps more traditional work was being passed over. We do not believe that this was due to bias against such work, but was somehow inherent in the process of jurying so many slides. For instance, the functional and tactile qualities of jewelry and qualities such as refined surfaces and delicate coloration can only be imagined when looking at slides, and there was no time to imagine, to contemplate what the objects might have been like in reality.

How do we define original work? What is derivative work? We admit to having different definitions, and as a result to having been inconsistent in our voting. This was problematic when students and teachers pursued similar work, when two individual artists work appeared closely related, and also when issues of cultural appropriation were present.

We hope that the *1994 Exhibition In Print* will be the first of many and that juried and curated 'exhibitions' will alternate years. We have learned a lot from making this one a reality, and welcome your comments and suggestions for future issues.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the *1994 Exhibition in Print* staff members Alice Sauer and Carolynn Desch, and assistants Sue Barratt, Terri Millman and Kristen Fogtman-Faust for their outstanding job of organizing slides, carousels, and files, as well their good humor over our long jurying days in June. Thanks also to our Editor, Frank Lewis, our essayist, Mary Douglas. and new Editorial Advisory Committee and SNAG Board member Megan Corwin, who silently endured the jurying process.

Donald Friedlich, Martha Glowacki, Susan Kingsley, Bruce Metcalf, Kate Wagle

COVER

Valerie Hector, Chicago, Illinois
"Ship of Transition" Series, Brooch, 1994
antique Venetian glass beads,
wood, 18k white gold, sterling, 6 x 1½ x ¾"
Photograph by Ralph Gabriner
See page 46

Metalsmithing: State of the Art

Who are we and where do we want to be?

Text: Mary Douglas

In 1968, a group of jewelers met "to organize professional designer craftsmen in metal arts." Attending this first gathering of what was to be the Society of North American Goldsmiths were Bob Ebendorf, Phil Fike, Hero Kielman, Brent Kington, Stanley Lechtzin, Kurt Matzdorf, Philip Morton, Ron Pearson, and Olaf Skoogfors – all but Pearson were in college level faculty positions. The minutes of that meeting refer to this collective as "a unique group" and that they "should stay as a group of special craftsmen."[1] This new organization's objectives, as stated in the Constitution, addressed "educational, scientific, and aesthetic purposes concerned with fostering, encouraging and teaching the subject of goldsmithing."[2] These initial efforts to provide a forum for studio jewelers have resulted in the Society and its membership, conferences, exhibitions, and publications – in short, activities which have established a group identity for the art practice known as metalsmithing.

This essay will concern issues of identity and self-definition as a response to the accompanying catalogue of metalwork, which is itself a defining act. The implied purpose of such an exhibition in print is to make an assessment of the field, to acknowledge trends, and to chart the discipline's latest developments. Likewise, this essay affords the opportunity to provide a critique of the field – to examine basic assumptions, esthetic models, and forums that delineate the group. A key issue is the placement of metals within a larger art practice. What is the relevance of metalwork as a discipline? And what is the cultural significance of that art today?

Comments on the Jury

Let's begin with the parameters of the *Exhibition in Print*. It is a survey that canvases a specific group, practitioners who identify themselves with *Metalsmith* magazine. This survey method is also directed by the jury's bias. Who is the jury? All are artists producing exhibition quality work– a group more alike than dissimilar, all but one are highly active in education as faculty, lecturers, and workshop instructors, and thus they might be expected to reinforce their own position.

To profile the selected entrants, how many matriculated through college art programs? How many hold faculty positions? How many were the jury's students? How many were known to be students of the jury's colleagues? (This leads to the fraternal nature of SNAG academia: during the jury process, personal information was presented about certain entrants; those nobody knew were unrepresented, so to speak.) So the notion of a survey as a general view is belied by its results, in this case a selection favoring metalwork as unique jewelry, sculpture, and vessel – forms that have been given status in contemporary craft as concept-oriented.

What was the jury's criteria? From my observations,[3] they seemed to take for granted a shared standard that included issues of quality, artistic excellence, and originality. Are these terms considered absolutes, rather than as having subjective meaning? Based on the type of work edited out (the almost wholesale rejection of traditional jewelry), the jury was ascribing to a Modernist view. One jurist was looking for "work that takes a risk," otherwise called cutting edge. This notion of the avant-garde is a belief in the progressive development of art. In this exhibition, newness is a criterion, thus, the focus on emerging artists.

Upholding another principle of Modernism, the jury sought to assign "authorship", attributing a particular style or image to one artist. For example, there was a debate over Allison MacGeorge because her work was seen as derivative of Jamie Bennett's. Yet, this very objection failed to acknowledge Bennett's own participation in a stylistic trend – biomorphic shapes and forms with a colorful impasto surface – used by many artists, such as painter Elizabeth Murray and ceramist Virginia Scotchie. While it's true that their (Bennett and MacGeorge) works are similar (both use an enameled brooch format), limiting a style to one artist is more revealing of the nature of the metalsmithing field: it's small and insular, which could create the tendency to stake out artistic turf. Perhaps the primacy given to originality is a reaction to art metal's undesirable cousin, the commercial jewelry business and the practice of copying competitors' designs.

Esthetic Models

Does the jury's selection imply an esthetic model for the field?. Certainly their emphasis on "conceptual" work eliminates a more design-oriented approach usually associated with functional work. Out of the 42 featured works, a little over half are utilitarian which includes 17 works of jewelry (the largest category) and 7 miscellaneous objects – table, knife, picture frames, candle snuffers, teapot, vase, and perfume bottle. Excepting the traditional Japanese sword and sheath, the latter group is notable for its idiosyncratic appearance, wherein personal expression has replaced function as a mandate for form. And, for the most part, the jewelry too, is of that ilk.

This group contains the false distinction between "production" and "one-of-a-kind" works. I cannot tell the difference, based on what forms look easier to reproduce or would be more commercially viable. (I do have personal knowledge of who teaches vs. who does craft fairs, however). While the bracelets and neckpieces are unique enough, the brooch continues to be the most popular format for artistic expression, lending its autonomy from the body to a creative freedom that can deny the object's status as jewelry. Thus, in the brooch (with the chest as presentation vehicle), we can see mini canvases and sculptures derivative of fine art as well as references to traditional jewelry.

Of the non-functional work represented, I discern two main categories, sculpture (the next largest group with 12 examples) and vessels, both of which partake of established discourses in art. The former is part of a post-modern critique in object making and utilizes a type of thinking associated with contemporary sculpture. This work also looks for inherent meaning attached to the forms, processes, and materials of metalsmithing. This component of the exhibition is probably the most provocative and problematic, as it raises questions about the discipline itself. I will address this sculptural work at greater length later in the essay.

The latter is a recognized (and somewhat conservative) signifier for art in craft media. In ceramics, "the vessel" is the estheticized version of the functional pot, having achieved status with the abstract expressionist work of Peter Voulkos, and going on to become a paradigm for the medium in the art of Wayne Higby, Andrea Gill, and others. Following this Modernist example are the metal vessels in this portfolio of Helen Shirk, Billie Jean Theide, Chris Ramsay, Claire Sanford, Lynn Whitford and Louis Graveline. However, these works are not estheticized versions of their functional counterparts, in that these objects aren't derivative of hollowware (other than sharing some technical processes).

I believe they are more aligned with ceramics, whether pot or vessel, as a field characterized by an individualist and bohemian production.[4] This art form of American culture contrasts with the social meaning of hollowware as European derived and class-based: the silversmithing product is a status symbol of aristocracy and the process reflects the Old World training of an apprenticeship system. Unlike the gleaming surfaces of Scandinavian Modern, these metal vessels have a rich surface coloration, a patina that emulates a ceramic glaze in texture and depth. This is understandable given these works' placement as art, for ceramics has the most fine art standing among the crafts.

But to return to the question of a supposed esthetic model for the field: what would a viewer presume from this selection of work? Would she take this *Exhibition in Print* as a guide for what forms metalsmithing should take and what metalsmithing should look like? I think curatorial decisions have been made in this juried contest, theoretically designed to give representation to the diversity of metalsmithing practices. And this has resulted in the promotion of certain types of work (described above) at the exclusion of others, such as building arts, hollowware, liturgical objects, and gemstone jewelry. This is not based on a set of standards, but on preference – and on what direction the jury thinks the field should take.

There is additional impact given that this exhibition appears under the auspices of *Metalsmith*, whose forum has had singular influence in picturing what metalsmithing is. The winning entries could be following the example of works previously showcased in the magazine, which is partly responsible for the proliferation of certain styles and images in the first place. Is the field reproducing itself through the magazine? While acknowledging possibly more compelling influences, such as craft fairs, on the *look* of the field, *Metalsmith*'s impact has a special meaning. It represents a constituency (and like a Congressman, is supposed to be all things to all people). The readership forms an occupational club, of sorts, based in studio production and academia. And through the career advancement of direct sales, exhibit opportunities, or student enrollment, members have a vested interest in what is seen in their magazine.

Sculpture Within the Discipline

This type of fellowship leads to my next question. In this jury, was any kind of work considered as long as the entrant studied metalsmithing or called herself a metalsmith? If so, is the inclusion of installation and other sculpture meant to expand the metals envelope or to simply document what's out there? Doesn't this beg a definition for the discipline? Inherently diverse, metalsmithing has been identified with categories based on tradition, process, and material: silversmithing, blacksmithing, goldsmithing, enameling, and categories based on function, such as the ones used for this survey: jewelry, hollowware, architectural works, etc. But in this era of mixed-media, interdisciplinary study, and pluralism in art, boundaries become blurred; the most notable for us is that between metalsmithing and sculpture.

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Two exhibitions of note have addressed this issue: "Form Beyond Function" in 1986 and last year's "Sculptural Concerns" which is still on tour. In the former, the curatorial premise of "metalsmiths making sculpture" remains quite broad, as distinctions are not made regarding style, imagery, or content – essentially, it's just another metal show. Yet, this effort, being the first of its kind, aimed to establish a critical and theoretical discourse for this kind of work, here, a small sampling of what is obviously a major trend in contemporary metalsmithing.

In the exhibition catalogue, the essayists addressed issues of definition and identity specific to metalsmithing, positing the field on a separate but non-hierarchical footing from the discipline of sculpture. Gary Griffin argued that the decorative arts provide a grounding for non-functional metalwork which contextualizes the use of scale and detail inherent to gold and silversmithing.[5] While seemingly obvious, his stance is also radical given the hegemony of the fine arts wherein the crafts are considered derivative rather than as having discipline-specific language.

Bruce Metcalf also challenged the canon with his analysis of craft in relation to Modernism: the former's sensibilities toward making, material, and scale and the latter's intellectual program describe incompatible agendas. This has led to a segregated development, leaving craft "outside the mainstream" of modern art and as a result denied the status of art.[6] Metcalf's position is political in that he seeks empowerment for craft by legitimizing its inherent qualities in the face of a dominant Modernist discourse. His insights offer an interpretive tool for a historical evaluation of the crafts.

Indeed, both essays provoke a re-examination of what we know about craftspeople that have been positioned within art narratives (although exclusion is more the norm). Craft, when it is recognized by the art establishment, is re-interpreted on *their* terms. Such inclusion means giving up the right of self-definition, which is central to Griffin's and Metcalf's theories of craft. This political interpretation of craft as a marginalized activity is compatible with current Post-Modern thinking, such as feminist theory and multi-culturalism.

I believe that this climate has opened up art practice for contemporary craftspeople, which has allowed a blending of art and craft concerns. For example, with Modernism, craft had to submit to concept; in the Post-modernism age, craft can *be* concept. Through historical appropriation, metalsmiths can examine tradition without adhering to it, mining the discipline for social meaning. This strategy also frees the maker from inventing form, another Modernist paradigm. Likewise, sculpture is not about form, but about a certain type of thinking. It is this methodology that serves the metalsmith as he uses his discipline for conceptual grounding.

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"Sculptural Concerns", the second exhibition noted, implies by its title the use of sculpture methodology, so stated in the catalogue preface: "the works are significant . . . most importantly for their implicit and explicit conceptual issues." This show "surveys the current state of the art of metalsmithing"[7] and is on view concurrently with the *Exhibition in Print*. These factors of focus, intent and timeliness invite an obvious comparison to *Metalsmith*'s endeavor, 25% of whose artists are also in "Sculptural Concerns."

"Sculptural Concerns" incorporates functional work (unlike "Form Beyond Function") with non-functional in a definition of metalsmithing as sculptural. Here, it seems the adjective is to mean "like sculpture," as the choice of jewelry and other decorative art forms do not, in fact, represent sculpture. Similarly, the majority of non-func-

tional works deviate from contemporary sculpture in that they represent ideas which are dated or are particular to metalsmithing. Therefore, works that are Modernist, narrative, or are remakes of traditional forms seem to characterize a "metalsmithing" version of sculpture documented in "Sculptural Concerns."

Does this mean that we are behind the times – a hold-out for vessel themes and negated function with things that don't work – or barking up the wrong tree with gilded plaza ploppers and inflated jewelry forms? Why does "narrative" have such a hold on our field (unless it relates to the predominant use of "personal expression") with the wealth of metals tradition, there is much work that stems from it – but with varying intents? In some cases, the traditional form serves as a blank canvas, in others, meaning is derived from it. All these differing aspects indicate that the curatorial premise has once again focused on a survey – you might as well call the exhibition "Three-dimensional Art." Like the bally-hoo surrounding the catalogue, this is content gone awry, one too many layers of meaning attached thus the picture is unclear.

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Regarding sculptural concerns for the *Exhibition in Print*, I think the jury has identified what the significance of that might be. The work in this catalogue that I'm calling sculpture is, in my mind, more cohesive than the work of the preceding shows. Of course it's a smaller collection and probably represents a younger generation of artists who reflect more current trends in art as a whole. To that end, this group is characterized by post-modern strategies of art-making.

Harriete Estel Berman and Lisa Norton utilize technique and material for class and gender based meaning. In her bathroom scale construction inspired by diet drink cans, Berman's tinsmithing calls to mind Mexican *retablos,* homemade icons fashioned from tin cans of the 19th century southwest trade. Also referencing quilting and sewing with its patterning and pinked edges, the object's fabrication becomes a conceptual device that links women's culture and ethnic traditions in a commentary of and on domestic labor. Norton's similar use of preprinted steel and sheet metal construction gives an institutional pallor to her reductive forms of a tissue dispenser and trash receptacle. These functional opposites of consumer culture image a K-mart counterpart in mauve or teal plastic, a choice which belies the notion of personalized meaning. Standardized decorator colors and other oxymora of middle class taste (such as wood grained plastic) speak to older, aristocratic values that have been mutated by the desire for modern convenience. Apropos, the bathroom is the site of both works where a similar subversion takes place regarding female self-image: the commercialized body is critiqued in Berman's tribute to weight loss, and Norton's cross-dressed objects refer to "gendered" roles, with her combination of a male HVAC language and female decorative subject.

Myra Mimlitsch-Gray, Jonathan Wahl, Erika Stefanutti, and Julia Jiannacopoulos incorporate decorative art forms and other domestic objects as an appropriation of craft tradition to recontextualize its social meaning. Thus, objects of complacency are revealed to have ideological underpinnings: for example, Wahl's American tinware reflects colonial heritage as the national myth of liberation, and Stefanutti's hand-sawed doily references the exploitation of female labor. Certainly, objects can stand for beliefs; in the preceding works, sculptural notions of craft incorporate a similar identification with material and process as being value-specific.

Other strategies include the semiotic treatment of the craft object in the works of Julia Barello and Susan Koons, where the object is an extrapolation of its accompanying image in a literal pairing of referent and sign; and the installation work of Carolynn Desch, Kim Cridler, Heather White and Todd Noe. Not obvious by the illustrations, White's "hat" is part of an array that hang head high under which one can assume different personas. Likewise, Noe's work is contextualized by its display: a collection of enigmatic objects each with its own shelf, as in a curio shop or museum of esoterica. This group of installations, while seemingly less connected to issues of metalsmithing, does show a rather involved fabrication process (values of craftsmanship?) and a reminiscence of function.

Metalsmiths are making the crossover into sculpture to the extent that our discourse is found lacking. As "lower life forms,"[8] our evolutionary needs are informed by other fields of study, such as history, cultural studies, and feminist theory – areas already incorporated by sculpture discourse. But as recent editorialists have put it, we need a "pro-metalsmithing" stance: formulating work that is conceptually based on the discipline's inherent properties and located within its heritage. Our placement is not reliant on a lineage of painting or sculpture.[9] The question has ceased to be "is it art or craft," but rather "is it relevant?"

Problems of Identity

Of course, relevance is determined by the systems and structures in which one must operate, and this has contributed to my own dilemma with identity. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate education in visual art, I had misgivings about calling myself a metalsmith, as I didn't feel particularly committed to the discipline. Although I have continued to do metalwork, these feelings have persisted . My particular case results from my need to do inter-disciplinary work. But the broader issue concerns the social nature of the field, where a certain amount of comfort and a great deal of investment has determined my connection. Due to the smallness of the community, I have come to know a good many players, establishing friendships and professional acquaintances. This is a valuable resource not easily abandoned. And equally valuable is the technical skill I have acquired over the years. (Initially, the reason I continued to work with metal was out of stubbornness as I didn't want to quit until I had gained proficiency).

While not everyone is as ambiguous towards metalwork as I am, I do think the resources of the collective remain a draw for many people. Hence, all these metalsmiths making sculpture *stay* in metalsmithing. This can be a confusing situation, as in the example of my own artwork which may or may not look like metalsmithing. Yet, I use metal techniques and specialized tools, like silversmithing stakes and planishing hammers. What am I? That depends on the situation at hand. I call myself a metalsmith when applying for a studio teaching position or a NEA grant. Artist is the preferred label when I'm presenting myself to a gallery owner or curator. This distinction is necessary due to how work is classified: jewelry, furniture, sculpture, etceteras. And working in the latter category, a metalsmith might need to subsume that identity to be acceptable (or at least be prepared to field questions like "did you *make* this?").

The dilemma continues with the institution of metalsmithing as represented by SNAG, whose most vocal role is an educational one, with the magazine catering to faculty as a teaching tool for students. It seems that this emphasis has taken away from the development of a base for the studio professional – a working environment of commercial galleries, collectors, and scholarship. Upon graduating, where do all these well-muscled metal students go (besides oblivion)? From a naive viewpoint, I assumed that one studied metalsmithing only to become a teacher of it (like I thought of algebra in high school), as there seemed to be no practical application for it.

For example, consider the recently discussed sculpture: where is such work exhibited? There is little commercial support with only a handful of galleries showing metalwork other than jewelry (and this would include knives, decorative vessels, andirons, and fire tools in addition to sculpture). So it seems that there is no demand for the very work showcased here. Is this disparity a result of academic dominance and insularity? Or is it simply a case of the product being ahead of the market? To answer my own question, I think the latter. Craft might be part of the art world, but it is the notoriously conservative element of it. Therefore, work that sells (and is featured in *American Craft*) seems to be pretty, colorful, and non-threatening.

If this is the dominant image of craft, then where does this sculpture fit in? Placement is the key issue here. "Craft" can be substituted for the words design, decorative art, handicraft, and art. I think it is important to understand which arena one is aiming for, as they are different options in terms of methodology, players, collections, and scholarship. My main criticism of the metalsmithing field concerns an indifference to these distinctions, as though all this work can be produced under the rubric "metal" and thrown out in the world – in other words, an undefined public is just supposed to be there to consume this mishmash of work, divergent beyond levels of functionality. Perhaps this is how the community fails in its continued focus on the commonality of training and process, as though this uniqueness alone is a sufficient marketing strategy.

Challenging Assumptions

Metalsmithing is a field identified by material.

Metalsmithing is more a state of mind, or a fraternal order whose members gain legitimacy through teaching, than an art or media-based practice. Just envision the metal work that's excluded from this survey – traditional types of gold, silver, and blacksmithing; forms of popular culture and industrial labor. What's left is an institutionally-supported standard of artmetal, its preferred forms being jewelry and sculpture. This is a restricted art practice, because if you make sculpture in this system, it's the metalsmith version of sculpture. And if you make jewelry, it has to be art-like, typically based in a clichéd concept such as the "theory of opposites" (my term for a proliferation of artists' statements about negative and positive, black and white, yin and yang, inner and outer, etceteras.).

Shallow thinking could result from the field's technical focus that has acted to repel criticism. I can think of several examples offhand from the pages of *Metalsmith*: one educator decrying a writer's use of "art jargon" and more than one indignant artist responding to a review of their work wherein criticism has been interpreted as a personal assault.[10] Such a reply assumes no distinction between the artist and the work, a symbiosis that is reflected in the use of "personal expression."

Art is about personal-expression.

This conception of art making, particularly evident in metalsmithing, has been delineated by Bruce Metcalf as a product of '70s education. As craft was placed within an art context, teachers who had primarily concerned themselves with technical knowledge found it necessary to incorporate an art language. Their efforts, being somewhat unsophisticated, resulted in a discussion about "personal expression," what Metcalf has termed "a default ideology". He explains, "Generally...it meant ...you could use the object that you were making as a vehicle for whatever personal meaning would come to mind and therefore that was expression...."[11] The use of this essentially autobiographic theme might explain why some artists are less than receptive to criticism as their artwork is, to them, symbolic of "a personal journey".

A case in point concerns the work of Helen Shirk, where there have been conflicting public and private views. In terms of the latter, she describes her art as a process of self-awareness:

> *The vessel provides an intimate format for me, in part because of the role it has played in man's history, but also because it allows a private conversation between me and the object. Patterns of growth and images I observe in nature become metaphors for what concerns me on a personal level...The symmetrical format provides an element of stability for me, an instinctively understood point from which to start my journey.*[12]

This statement applies to work from the "Sustaining Spirit" series in this exhibition, an undulating copper bowl form depicting plant life. But it also could speak for earlier work along this line from the mid-'80s, which was a marked departure from her signature work – constructivist, sterling silver hollowware that was the epitome of formal analysis. By contrast, the new work was more organic and full of color, employing a nature motif that the artist has invested in for symbolic content.

A 1985 review described this work as a continuation of "formal, compositional inquiries," where the change existed in format – noting the semantic difference between "hollowware" and "vessel".[13] While questioning this change in the artist's direction, the review did not acknowledge the personal content (how could it?) and thus drew a strong reply from Shirk. The reviewer's rhetorical questions were responded to literally as the artist gave a detailed account of her motivations surrounding the creation of this body of work, which included life in England, the southwest, and having a baby. Thus, travelogue and maternal status become the real informants for this work's meaning, not what it looks like, and not the context of other metalsmithing, art or design.

In this instance, the artist has invested her work with private meaning that is not necessarily decipherable or becomes subordinate to the formal properties of the artwork. Another example concerns Billie Jean Theide, who described the series included in this exhibition with a language of personal expression:

> *"Conceptually, the work is a conscious response to spiritual and physical journeys and explorations, records of personal thoughts and recollections, autobiographical in nature. The pieces refer to the nature of specific personal relationships....*[14]

Regardless of such intent, her *Butte Teapot* is accessible through formalism. This piece reads as a maquette of western plains morphology, with its "handle" poised like a boulder at cliff's edge. Or, the metal vessel stands for a ship with its form suggesting broadsides and prow. Theide has managed to capture these essences of monumentality with a simplicity of form, so that this work is immediately recognizable – at least in photographs.

Seeing the actual object, I was totally unprepared for its scale – at 3 inches in height, the diminutive size is a perversity of the implied forms. What is the rationale for such miniaturization? Which tradition is this work coming from – sculpture which is public or goldsmithing (locket, reliquary) which is private? As a "container" of the artist's experience, this work equates smallness with the intimate in a representation of the personal. My concern is that the audience gets shut out in the process of this "private conversation between [the maker] and the object."

Many other artists use a similar language, referring to their art as a "personal ritual", or an "iconography all my own".[15] Such phraseology supports my contention that "personal expression" encourages a self-absorbed art practice that further insulates metalsmithing from an audience other than itself. The craft of goldsmithing is historically secretive and inclusive; couple that with private subject matter or craft as catharsis and you have a winning combination to insure inaccessibility. It's a little schizophrenic, as one artist says of her pieces: "And contrary to the fact that they were made for exhibition, portions of their tale are very private." My question is, who is supposed to care or even be aware of this hidden narrative? More obvious to a viewing public would be the craftsmanship (in itself a weird enough thing as most people are not knowledgeable of hand skills and materials), frequently exploited through media conceit to give importance or artistic relevance to self-indulgent works with personal meaning.

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The pitfalls of personal expression can be compared to critic Jeff Kelley's ideological assessment of craft, specifically "the ceramics wing of the very late modernist camp":

> *"Here, one sings only the praises of Protestant ethics, of the hand-made, of skill as an end in itself, and of craftsmanship as a form of social obedience. As we approach the new millennium, what is generally meant by 'craft' is not unlike what was meant by American Arts and Crafts ideologues a century ago, i.e., an attitude about creative work...that represents an uncritical withdrawal from the modern world into the domain of what critic Christopher Knight has called 'the merely personal.'"*[16]

As previously stated, metalwork in the "vessel" format partakes of a ceramics lineage as artworks reflecting a Modernist sensibility. There, the autonomous art object sits without context; it is meant to be viewed as having its own language, that of formalism. In the case of craft objects, the material and technique have an additional cultural presence, which Kelley interprets correctly as a function of labor. And since this labor is referencing a pre-industrial past, the craftsman is subject to a nostalgic view, what Kelley has termed "an ideology of withdrawal".

In this century, craft practice has taken on a therapeutic role, what Jackson Lears's analysis of the Arts and Crafts Movement details as "psychic self-renewal", whereby craft was used as a "panacea for modern ills". However, Jackson writes, "American craft leaders quickly lost sight of religious or communal frameworks of meaning outside the self...they allowed their quest for wholeness to center on the self alone."[17] Kelley sees this focus, continued today, as detrimental. He states:

> *"Likewise, today's craftsperson...tends to withdraw into a highly specialized, late-modernist version of the romantic self, which is now a reactionary social construction of the "merely personalized consumer-self," the function of which is the denial of the harsh social and political realities of late-capitalist culture in the guise of therapeutic self-renewal."*[18]

Here, he could be speaking for metalsmiths, certainly a specialized enough identity, where "the romantic self" is a function of a craft culture that is positioned outside of mainstream society, both as an occupation and a lifestyle. Thus, the concept of personal expression as an exploration of one's inner self functions in the vacation-like settings of rural craft schools. Or it can function at one's bench, where ideas are mined in solitude. As a metalsmith recently proclaimed:

> *"I live very privately, confess to being a recluse, and enjoy working long hours in my remote studio, seeing very few people, the UPS driver and postman serving as major conduits between my environment and the wider cultural sphere."*

Given the isolation in this romantic identity, what is the cultural significance of today's metalsmithing (arguments about art's relevance aside)? Certainly, Kelley's critique points to an art that is more engaged.

Metalsmiths are a unique group.

As an art practice, metalsmithing needs to be more viable. It needs to function outside its closed system. If all metal shows take place in the university art gallery circuit, and the only metalwork that sells is jewelry, and the term "metalsmithing" is a construct of the group, then the work in this issue has a very limited audience – basically the practitioners themselves. This is my personal dilemma with calling myself a metalsmith and joining a club that has specialized itself into irrelevance. And doesn't the work herein deserve a larger audience, some critical acclaim for artistic accomplishment, a wider sphere of influence as an art form uniquely capable of meaning? The responsibility for such change lies within. I could say that this group called metalsmiths is its own worst enemy.

American metalsmithing has no historical burden.

As an example, take the controversy over the cover of *Metalsmith*'s Spring issue which featured the work of Janet Payne Bowles. There were objections to the focus on historical work because "only living artists should get that type of press". This is a short-sighted attitude which goes a long way towards explaining the narrow confines of the field. Other objections were made that questioned the technical competence of the work, as though it set a bad example for students. In my mind, this situation borders on the absurd.

Firstly, that particular cover can only help this field by bringing in a larger audience that includes decorative art historians, curators, and collectors. Secondly, practitioners can benefit from knowing the discipline's history so that they do not go about reinventing the wheel or making philistine comments about Payne Bowle's technique. In the con-

text of Women's Studies and the Arts and Crafts Movement, this artist has been the subject of several recent studies.[19] It is entirely appropriate that the magazine devoted to artmetal should be on that bandwagon. Who else should take an activist role in presenting research concerning the neglected history of craft practitioners and women artists?

If pressed for an interpretation, I believe the response to Payne Bowles has to do with our culture's love of invention, particularly as told in the metals foundation myth, whereby a few pioneering individuals recreated American metalsmithing in the 20th century.[20] This was accomplished in the face of adversity as there were no schools or teachers left in this country by the 1920s (or so the story goes). As an oral history, this is a narrative of academic development, which does not account for craft practice in ethnic traditions or guilds – areas utilized by Payne Bowles as she produced metalwork during the very time when silversmithing was supposedly dead in this country.

Her work disturbs the myth of invention in another way as it prefigured metalsmithing of the 1970s, a time of experimentation following the dominant model of Scandinavian Modern metalwork. Payne Bowles' featured chalice, produced in the 1920s, is a precedent for the opening up of the practice 50 years later. As revealed in one account: "More abstract forms served her growing interest in exploring self-expression unrestricted by conventionalization and the constraints of traditional metalsmithing practices."[21] Janet Payne Bowles was clearly ahead of her time, both as an artist and woman. I find it interesting that anyone would find fault with her process or technique now.

• • • • •

In this essay, I have sought to act as a respondent to issues circulating in the metalsmithing field – part of its discourse which includes the various efforts cited here at defining and theorizing about our discipline, as well as the ongoing debate in *Metalsmith* over conflicting agendas within the community. This juried exhibition affords the opportunity to acknowledge the particulars of self-identity and how that is construed. The resulting group dynamic has created esthetic models which are specific rather than general representations of the field. One of the predominant models is sculpture within the discipline, which indicates a movement toward defining artistic significance – the sphere where cultural relevance lies for contemporary metalsmithing. As such, our system needs to expand, to be less insular in developing artistic identity. We need to scrutinize assumptions and be aware of ideological positions that define our practice, all for the sake of timeliness. As craftspeople, we can avoid nostalgia and still preserve the metalsmith's specialized identity within the larger art community, finding new ways to utilize the values of our specific training and activity.

Mary Douglas works as an artist, writer, and researcher and is teaching this fall at the University of North Texas in Denton. She is also a recent recipient of an NEA Artist's Grant in metalsmithing.

Notes

1. Minutes from the Meeting of the Planning Committee for the Contemporary Jewelers Conference, November 16, 1968. SNAG Archives, Phoenix AZ. See also Society of North American Goldsmiths, *The Founding Masters* (Saratoga Springs, NY: Skidmore College, 1988) foreword.
2. SNAG Constitution, *Goldsmiths Journal* 3.4 (1977): insert.
3. In June of this year, I was invited to Milwaukee to observe the complete jurying process for this "Exhibition in Print."
4. For an cultural analysis of post-war American ceramics, see Jeff Kelley, "Upward Mobility," *American Ceramics* 9.2 (1991): 35–39.
5. David Prince, et al., *Form Beyond Function, Recent Sculpture by North American Metalsmiths* (Mt. Vernon, IL: Mitchell Foundation, 1986) 6–7.
6. Prince 4–5.
7. *Sculptural Concerns, Contemporary American Metalworking* (Cincinnati: Contemporary Arts Center, 1993) 4–5.
8. Moniker attributed to Michael Hall, former sculpture department head at Cranbrook Academy of Art.
9. See letters by Erika Stefanutti and Kim Cridler, Metalsmith 14.2 (1994): 6+.
10. "Letters," *Metalsmith* 14.2 (1994): 44–45.
"Letters," *Metalsmith* 11.4 (1991): 8.
"Letters," *Metalsmith* 6.1 (1986): 6+.
See also a rebuke of a Janet Koplos review, *Metalsmith* 11.3 (1991): 6.
11. Bruce Metcalf, "Three Decades of American Metal Work," American Craft Museum Lecture Series, New York, 21 July 1994.
12. *Sculptural Concerns* 122.
13. Gary Griffin, "Helen Shirk," *Metalsmith* 5.4 (1985): 46.
14. *Sculptural Concerns* 126.
15. For additional examples of personal expression, see *Sculptural Concerns*, statements by Lucinda Brogden, Eun-Mee Chung, Vicki Sedman, Munya Avigail Upin, Dale Wedig.
16. Kelley 37.
17. Kelley 37, citing from T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).
18. Kelley 37.
19. See W. Scott Braznell, "Forging Modernist: The Metalwork and Jewelry of Janet Payne Bowles," *Metalsmith* 14.2 (1994): 16–25. Barry Shifman, *The Arts and Crafts Metalwork of Janet Payne Bowles* (Indianapolis, IN: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1993). Frances Killam and JoEllen Stevens, "Wynn, Copeland, Bowles: Models in Studio Practice," SNAG Conference, San Francisco, 8 April 1990.
20. For a detailed history, see Jeannine Falino's essay, "Metalsmithing at Midcentury," in *Sculptural Concerns*.
21. Braznell 21.

Metalsmith

1994 EXHIBITION IN PRINT

Claire Sanford
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Green Pitcher and *Brown Vase*, 1993
patinated copper
19½"h., 17½"h.

This body of work builds from simple tapered vessel forms, adding thin birdlike necks and spouts and the gestural movement of the spiral handle. Influences include the animation of human or bird forms and details are drawn from Greco-Roman vases or, more correctly, the memory of these vases. As with earlier pieces, I'm concerned with interpreting an old and fragmented quality in the work through the coloration and pieced-together surface.

My construction method is very direct and is a close translation of the taped, stapled and glued paper models these pieces are from. The choice of thin gauge copper for the vessels allows for a greater spontaneity in the fabrication as well as giving the pieces a delicate shell-like quality.

I see these pieces in pairs or groups rather than singularly so that the gestures or colors of individual vessels can play off of one another emphasizing their animated quality. At the same time, the fact that they are patinated metal gives them a quality of being frozen in time like that of an abandoned shell where, the animal has long since moved on to a new home.

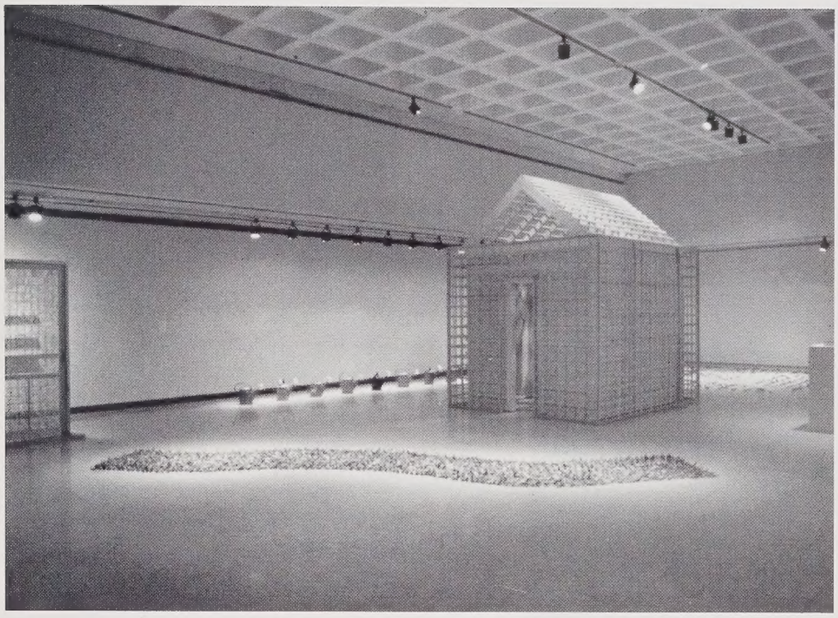
Wright Deter
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

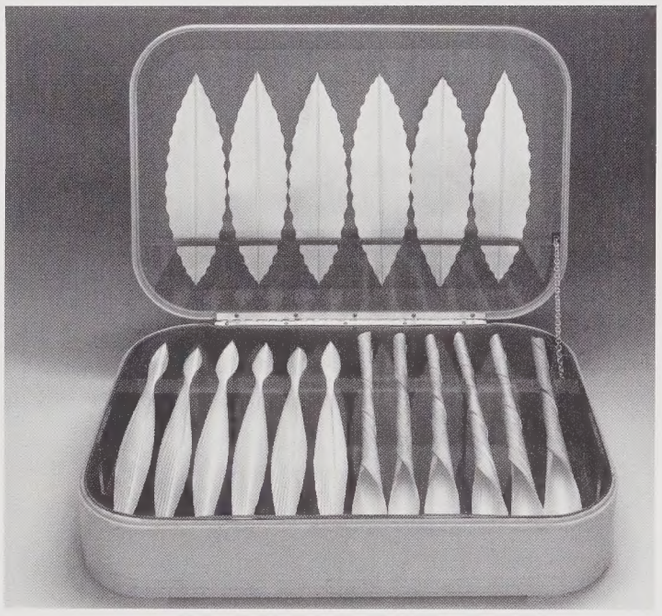
Hope Table, 1993
cast bronze
25 x 21 x 18"

There is a grand tradition of functional objects cast in bronze. It is both the beauty of such work-specifically Chinese bronzes and the fascination with the process of casting bronze which inspire me to create in this medium.

I employ the traditional lost wax method to cast my work. However, I construct my prototypes from various materials such as wood and foam rather than model or carve them from wax. This approach allows me a greater flexibility and immediacy of design which I could not achieve with modeling or carving.

Much of the work produced in the contemporary crafts movement today has a precious and fragile quality which eliminates the function both in fact and in the minds of collectors. I strive in my work to combine stability, longevity and beauty. I design my work to be viewed and used as much outdoors as indoors.





Carolynn Desch
St. Charles, Illinois

Garden Project Installation,
Room installation, 1994
mixed media

Garden Project Installation, Service for Six,
1994, detail
found object, Plexiglas, Formica, sterling silver
14 x 18 x 12"
Photographs by Richard Gehrke

The Garden Project is an installation of seven works. My thoughts, when developing this piece, were centered around issues of family and childhood, loss, aging, and memory. The house, *Recourse;* garden, *Past Time* and river/path, *Horizontal Approach* are the central works of the *installation.* The door, *As Far As One Knows;* stones, Between *Past and Present;* watering cans, *Blackbirds* and silver service, *Service for Six* extend the primary ideas in several directions.

Pod, leaf and petal forms are used as metaphors in my work. Petals and leaves are inconsequentially small; they come and go each season and embody the persistent cycle of life and death. I have taken the natural forms and transformed them materially. Because I made them, they are a tamed nature which address the issues that effect my own interior experience. The forms of the river/path and garden represent the idea of the interior planted in nature. Little losses can grow into a river with a strong current. Struggles with aging can also be associated with a prelapsarian Garden of Eden with no time and no aging.

Ordering speaks to an experience many women share; a need to be fastidious about the details of life, family and home. Fastidiousness equates with mastery; mastery for mastery's sake. Mastery of the tedious gives women status among themselves. Rather than mastery of the grand and heroic, women master the seemingly inconsequential. The results of this mastery can be astonishing, for example: Renaissance needlework, lace making, and 20TH century quilting. Women seem historically responsible for the smallest details of life. However, it is possible for attention to this kind of detail to become obsessive and self absorbed. It can be an escape or a trap. I believe that there is surrender in ones decision to agree to perform the tedious. There is little in the actual work that is gratifying, only the end result. I am familiar with this behavior and see it's shadow in the ordering and configuration of my work. There is a tolerance for the tedious in the processes I use.

Susan Hamlet
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Still Life, Brooch, 1994
sterling, gold plate
1½ x 1⅛ x ⅜"

My objective with this group of work is to begin to develop greater familiarity with representational language. In learning to gauge the associative value of objects within imagery, my approach explores symbolic connections which are both obvious and obscure. In this way I hope to discover expressive affinities between objects which operate through both likely and unlikely logic, and which may provoke a quiet sense of uncertainty or uneasy resolve.

I believe the utilization of imagery engages the mind more fully, especially when inciting the rich realm of the imagination. By employing that which is imagined this implies a conceivable construction, yet one not necessarily plausible or rational. The scenarios which I depict in miniature scale often work through the suggestion of containment, confinement and some manner of symbolic release. While striving to make pieces which are lyrical or even nostalgic in nature, ultimately my efforts toward expression seek some means of reclamation, the sense of that which has been lost, and is now redeemed.

Polly Reidhead

Las Cruces, New Mexico

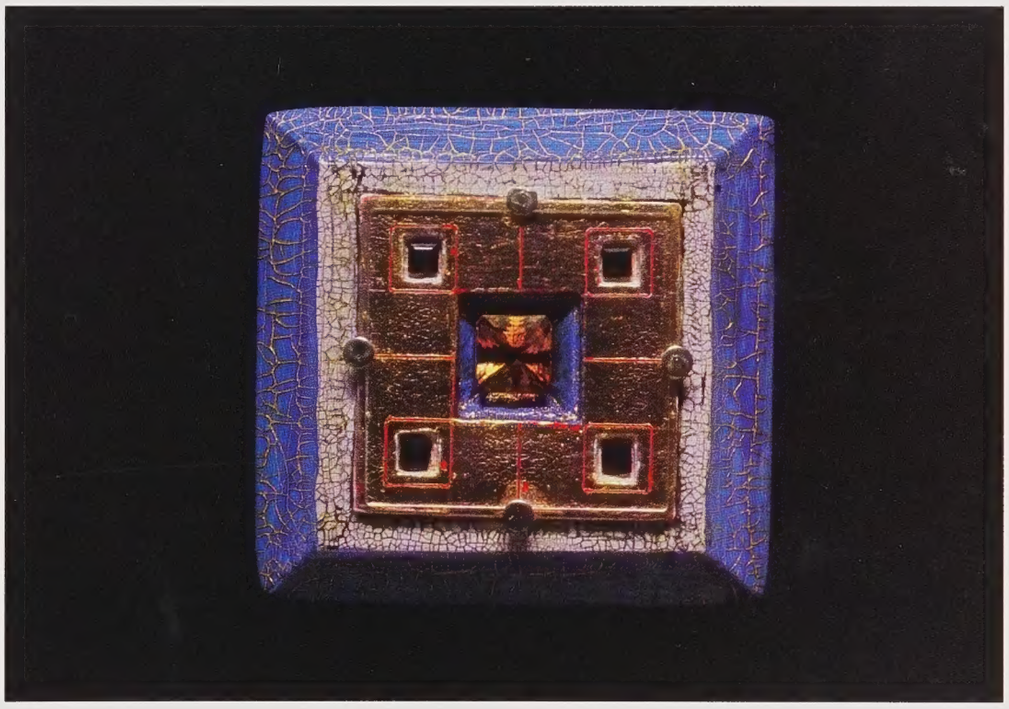
Untitled, Brooch, 1994
925 silver, polychromed maple wood, glass, topaz, sapphires, 23k leaf
2 x 2 x ⅜"

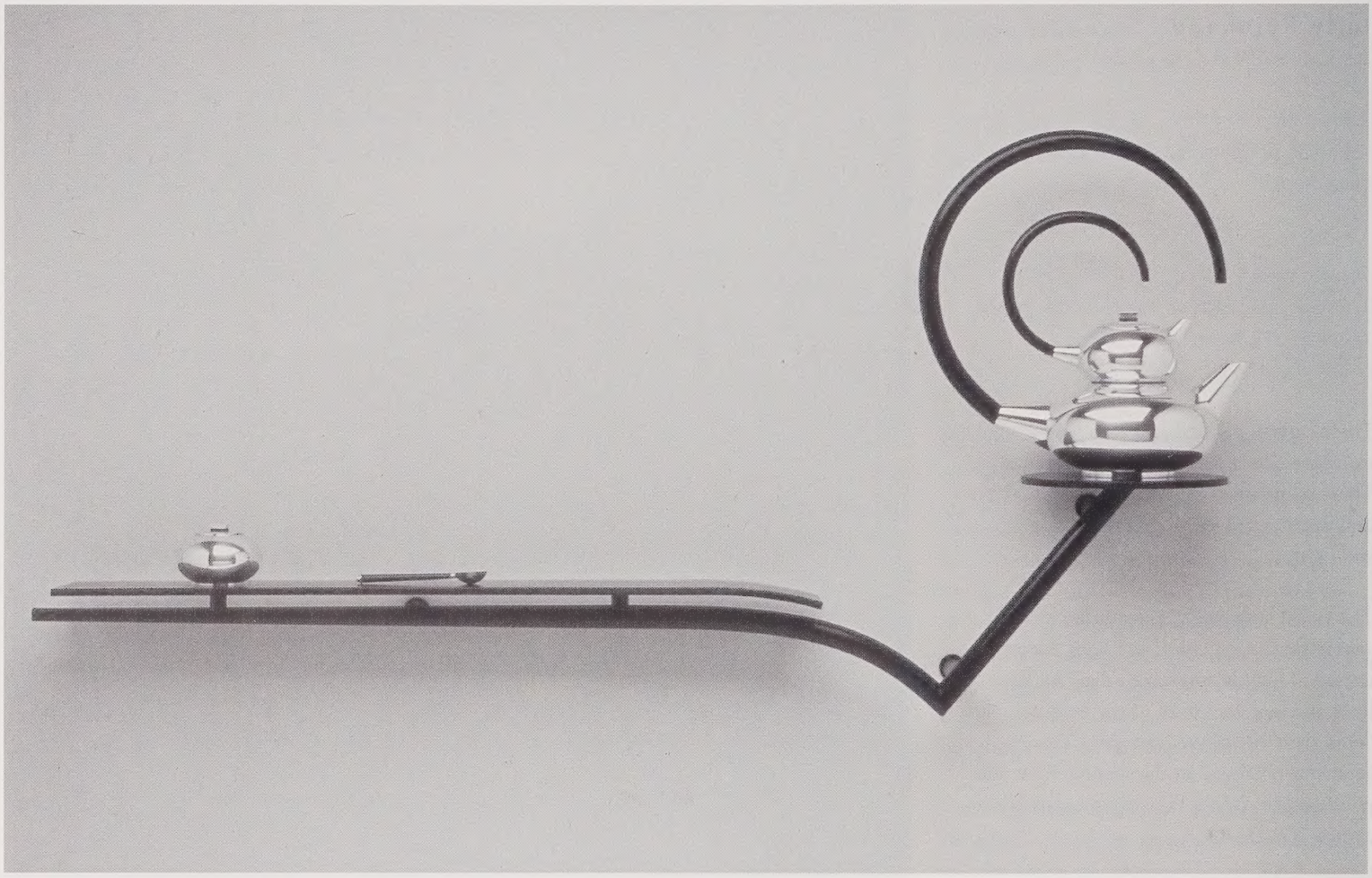
Untitled, Brooch, 1994
925 silver, polychromed maple wood, garnet, moonstones, 23k leaf
2 x 2 x ½"

These carved, painted and gold leafed maple wood forms serve as containers for relics. These reliquaries house elements from the natural world: sand, earth pigments, bone and light.

The visual language is a repetition of geometric shapes, color, and light. Geometry is used as mandala or sacred diagram (a symbolic representation of the essential, ordered structure of the universe.) This geometry is echoed in the shapes of cut and polished gem stones (amethyst, sapphire, garnet, topaz).

The imperfect rawness of the natural world, the cracked, rough, handled surfaces covered with color and gold combine with the perfect light that seems to emanate from cut gems. The earthly reds of garnet and transcendent blues of sapphire and iolite resonate with the golden wood to create an enigmatic vibration that is the beauty of the physical object. The sublimation or conversion of a solid substance by heat (or light) into a vapor that cools and returns to solid form is an appropriate physical analogy for the hovering between the material and the immaterial created by this mandala jewelry.



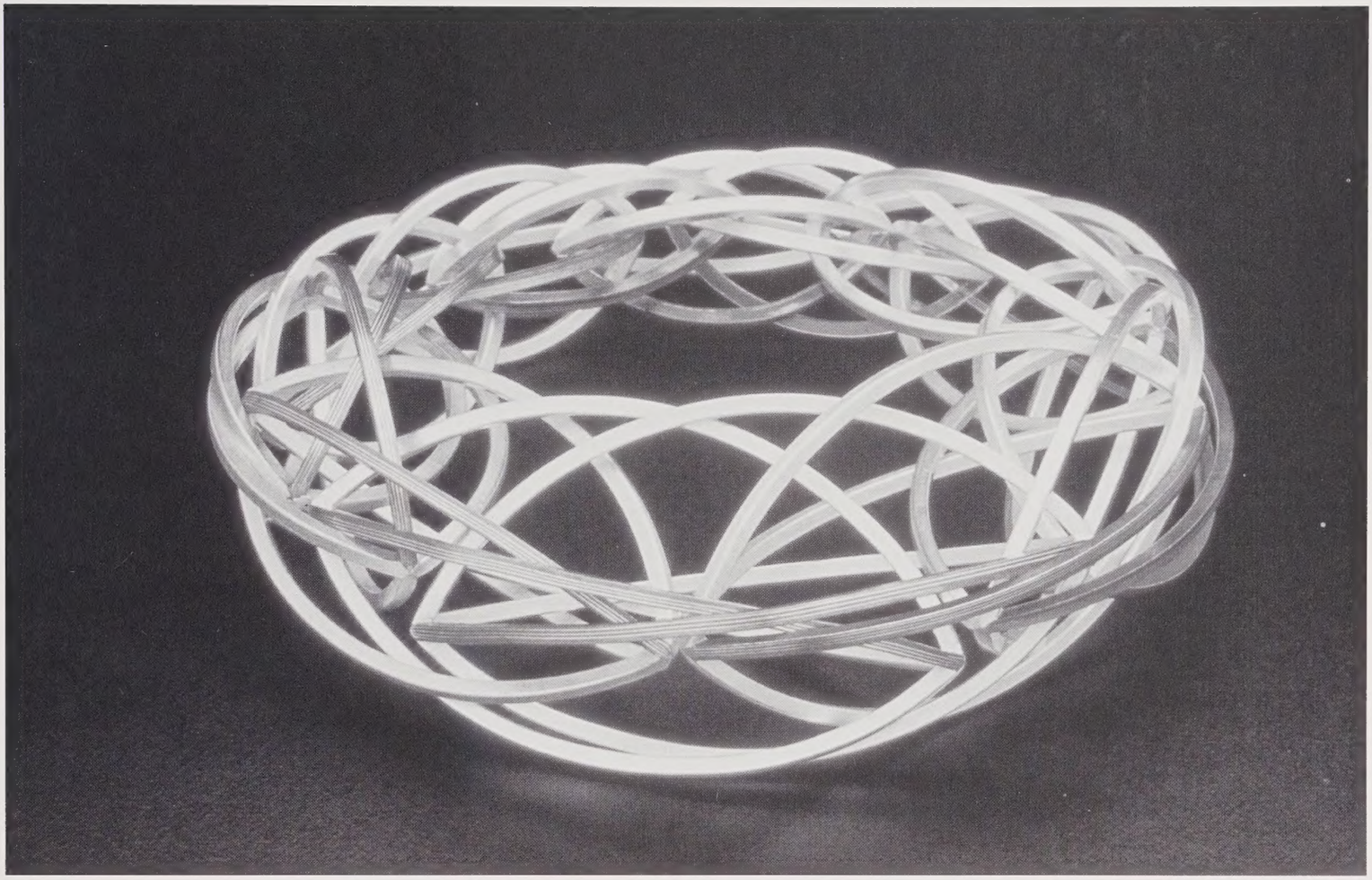


Charles Crowley
Bedford, Massachusetts

Wall Mounted Tea Service, 1992
sterling, painted aluminum
22 x 42 x 8"

Hollowware has been my daily practice for about twelve years now. During this time I have made about one hundred fifty vessels, most of which have been one of a kind. Out of this has developed an attitude that is more like that of a potter than that of a metalsmith. Over time the body of work has become much more important than any one piece. This removes some of the difficult creative barriers involved with one of a kind work in precious metals.

The forms I use are generated by a combination of spun and hand work. My strongest artistic references are animal and human gestures. These I employ to give life to the simple geometric forms. I am still amazed by the range of attitudes that can be conveyed by the tilt of a spout or the angle of a handle. Lately, I have become more aware of the life a piece leads once outside, my hands. Maintainable finishes and durability have become much more important. The ability of the pieces to function was not, at first, my prime objective but as time has passed I've accepted more the role of being a silversmith and all that entails. Functionality at times has been an annoying challenge yet at the same time has opened up new avenues particularly in the presentation and display of tea services.

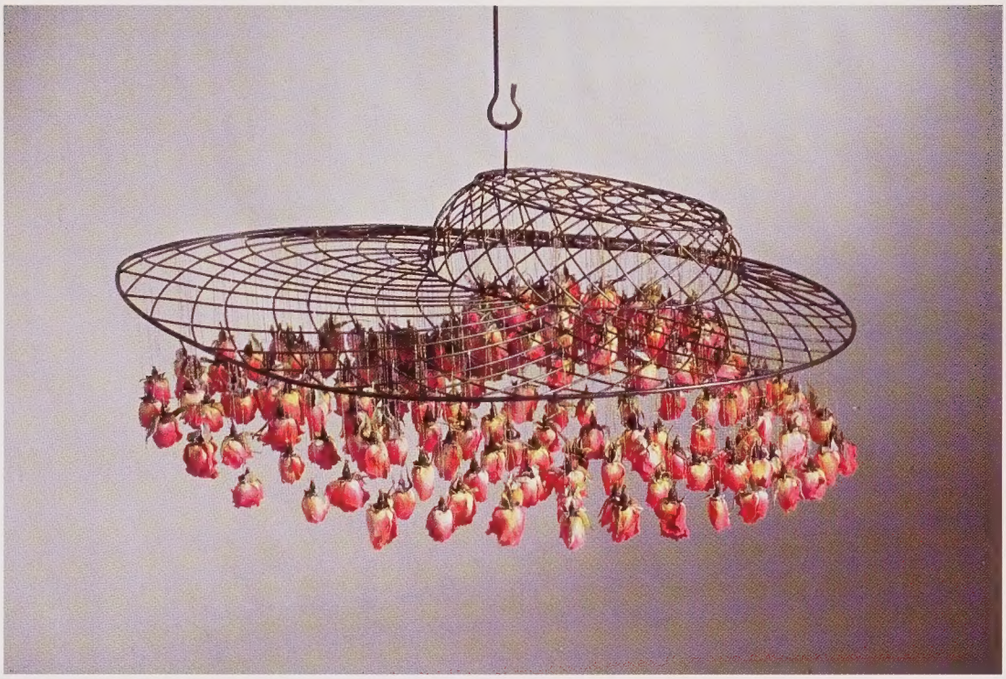


Gina Pankowski
Seattle, Washington

Lattis Bracelet #16, 1994
sterling, mokume-gane, fabricated
1¼ x 4¼ x 4 ½"
Photo by Douglas Yaple

In this current group of bracelet and necklace forms I am exploring the ability of line and pattern to create structure, form, and motion. I am fascinated with how the smallest structures, the crystals of an element, or the cells of an organic object create form through repetition. This work is an expression of my environment, natural and constructed. The perfection of nature and its endless vocabulary of forms is a constant source of inspiration for me.

As a jeweler I work to create forms that are compatible with the wearer in a performance of natural and mechanical synthesis.



Heather M. White
Rosendale, New York

Wide Brimmed Hat, Headpiece, 1993
dried roses, gold thread, steel
11 x 17 x 20"

The phrase "wearing many hats" alludes to the notion of attaining our whims or desires. Hats are an integral part of the language of clothing. They indicate the spirit of the wearer, occupations, and group affiliations.

The headpieces created in a recent series are forms that are not commonly worn in this century. They purposely refer to headpieces prior to the 20th century with the intention of leaving an iconic residue.

These hats are symbolic (uni) forms. They are visual metonymies that reveal the ideal persona belonging to each form as recorded in history. The recognizable form of each piece in the series indicates the institution to which it subscribes: the crown to imperial sovereignty, the helmet to defense and warfare, the jester to amusement, the wide brimmed hat to feminine fashion and the top hat to masculine bourgeois attire.

The choice of materials and the craft techniques used rupture the meanings projected by the hat forms. *Wide Brimmed Hat* is imbued with the most latent quality of all the headpieces. It coexists with a physical image of itself laboriously made by stringing and tying 380 dried roses (or remnants of the past). In addition to the role of the materials, the notion of "women's work" prevails along with the sweetly stale scent of the roses.

In particular, the hats tamper with the facades, personas, and alter egos people adapt. Anyone may be king for a day (crown) or be clouded with a halo of memories (rose hat). The works function as symbolic "accouterments that assist individuals in presenting their image and expression."*

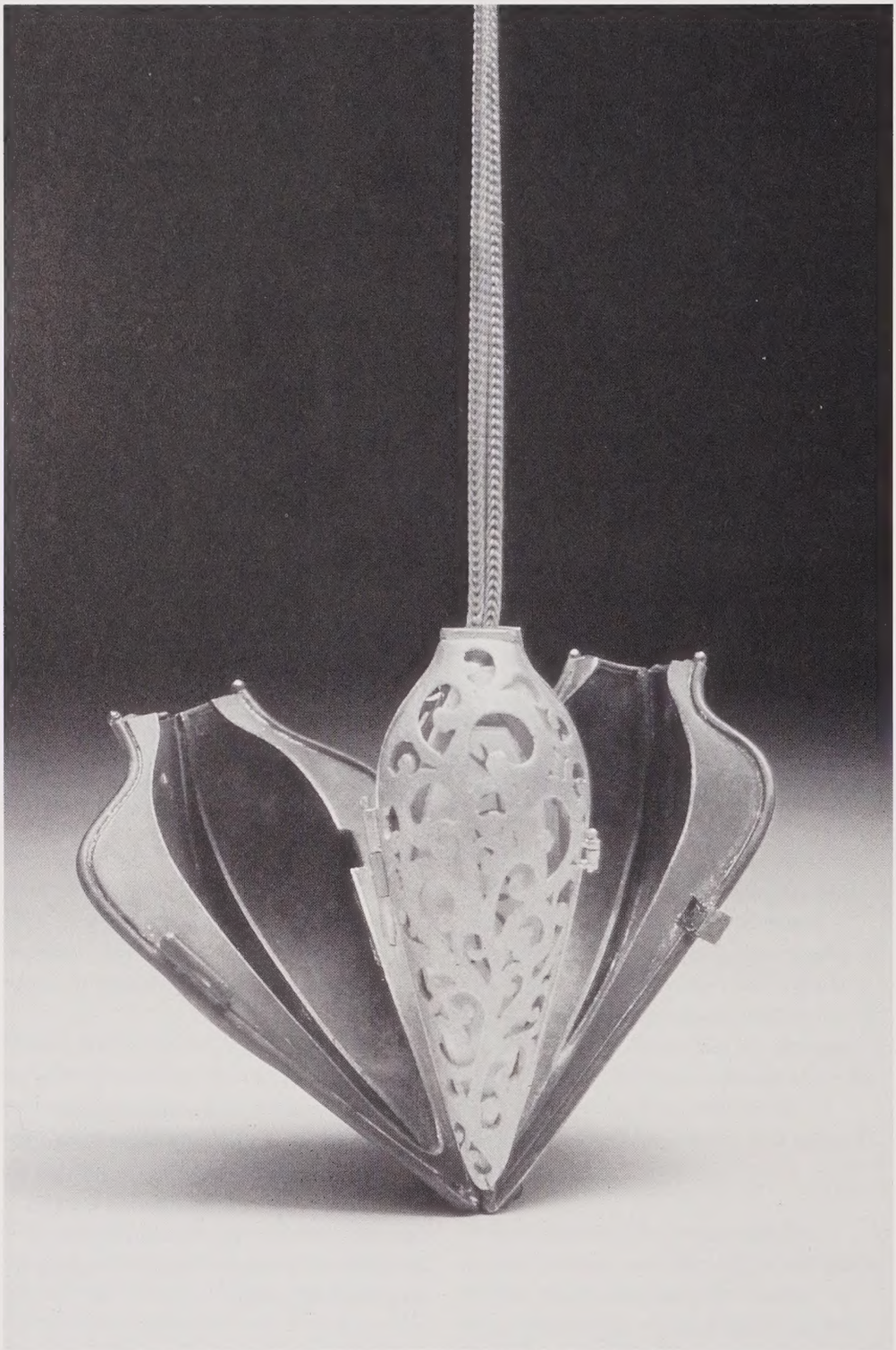
Collectively the works are an intersection of beauty, craft, cognition and enchantment. Through the transformation of garments these works spark reevaluations and discoveries within the common conventions of our culture.

*Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne Bubolz Eichter, *Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order*

Pat Flynn
Accokeek, Maryland

Bracelet, 1993
iron, 18k, pearls
2¾ x 3 x ½"

There are a number of qualities of jewelry that compel me as a maker. I like the physical trauma, the tools, the hands, the scale, the power that is required, the conflicts that produce these subtle objects made by hands for hands; the strength required to make such intimate, fragile objects.



Jan Baum
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Fragmented: A Collection, Pendant, 1994
bronze, 24k plate, letters
2⅝ x 1⅝ x 1 7/16"

This series of jewelry explores ideas, experiences and qualities which include ideas about what guides us and what keeps us plumb; experiences that show the importance of thick skin and invisible strengths; and qualities which are revealed through surface, details and refinement. I use forms that I find significant such as: the compass, the plumb bob, the shield and the cocoon.

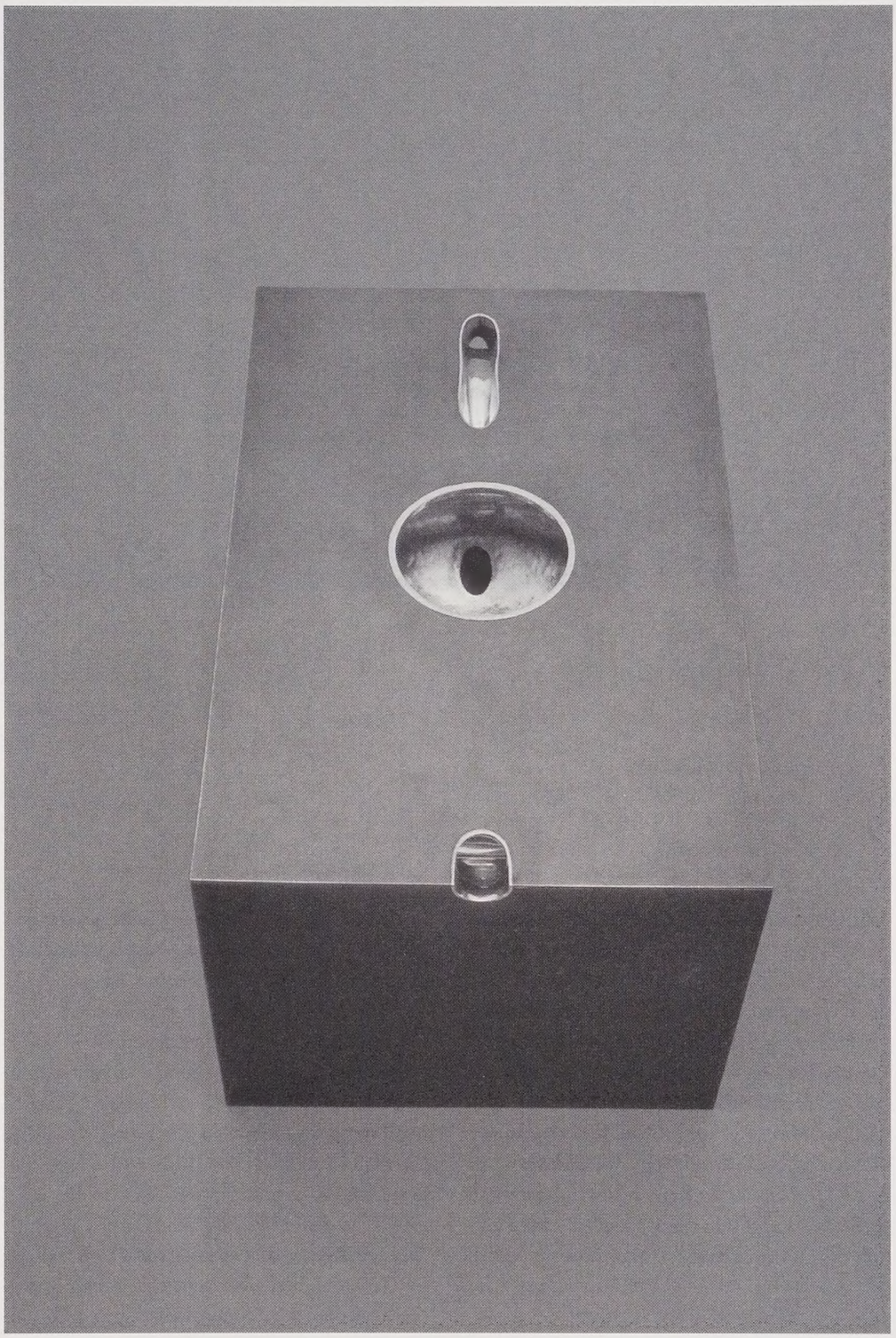
An overriding language of protection and interaction is present. Through the use of successive layers, floral screens, windows and fragments there is concealment as well as an invitation to explore. The exploration of the layers and of viewer participation further the intimacy which is vital to the work.

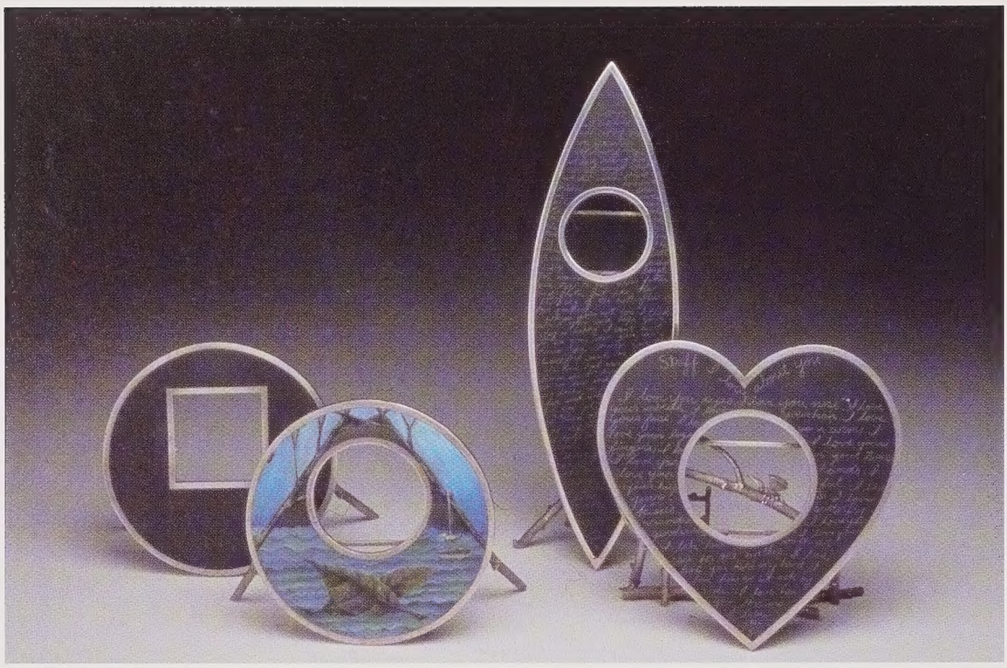
It is important that the pendants are a size relative to the hand and that they feel comfortable when held. All of the pendants hang low on the body, just below the sternum. The physicality of the jewelry moving on the body reminds the wearer of its presence. In turn, this leads the mind to think about the ideas in the piece.

Myra Mimlitsch Gray
New Paltz, New York

Encased Teapot II, 1993
silver, copper
5¼ x 9½ x 6¼"

My current hollowware examines the social function of traditional tableware and its role as portrait of status. The objects refer in form to packaging and mold-making: I am interested in establishing tension between the hand-made and the industrially produced object. The work has evolved from bisected vessels and flatware in *Encasements*, in which traditional silver tableware is confined within austere boxes. Once encased, the integral object is denied its image potential. Probing is required to verify the object's completeness. These enclosed objects shift the aesthetic experience from the visual to the tactile, challenging the visual art hierarchy and questioning the functional aspects of luxury tableware.





Roberta Williamson
Berea, Ohio

Fragile Wings, Picture Frames, 1994
sterling, slate, oil paint
6 x 4½ x 4"

When I was a little girl my Czechoslovakian parents and family lived in a basement apartment of a three story walk-up in Chicago. We'd enter the apartment on a rickety wooden bridge between two, dark, brick walls. There was the kitchen where my Mother would bake the bread, make the soup and sew all our clothes. The other room, used for everything else had a small window that was below street level and looked out at the concrete wall a few feet away. I do not remember seeing a tree or a blade of grass. The air hurt my lungs.

Little by little my Dad built a house in the suburbs for us as a surprise. One day he drove us there. I jumped out of the car, I could not believe how beautiful everything was. It was Spring and there was green everywhere, the air smelled so good and fresh. It was the first time that I had heard birds singing. I will never forget how happy I was. My life went from black and white and sad to beautiful and joyous.

When I began this series of pieces Lauren, my daughter, had what appeared to be a potentially serious medical problem. It was all I could think about. She means everything to me. The pieces unconsciously were very dark and many took on the shape of the scar Lauren had that refused to heal. I had often used that shape to represent a boat or a leaf shape, now it took on a whole new meaning. When I got the news that Lauren was fine, my work immediately changed from frightened and dark to bright and joyous. It was just like that day when I was a little girl and my life changed from dark and sad to beautiful and happy.

I have chosen to write about each piece in 4 x 4" bright yellow, cloth bound books with black lettered titles. The titles of the pieces are the titles of the books. There is one black book with silver letters "Fragile Wings". This book is about my fears and my sadness.

My work has always been affected by my life and my family. As I mature as an artist I find it gently unfolding the leaves that protect me. It creates that special miniature world I played in when I was a little girl.

Helen Shirk
La Mesa, California

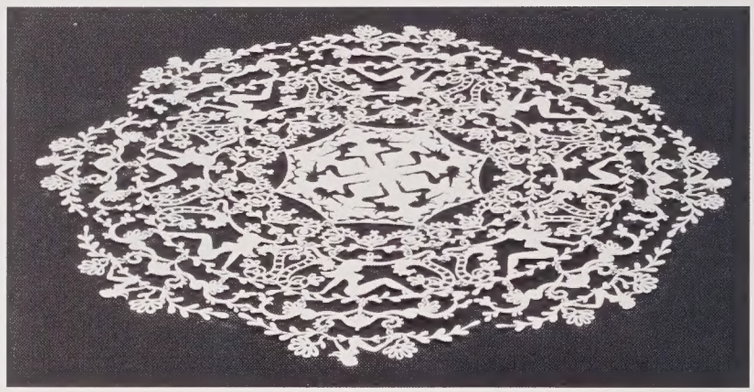
Sustaining Spirit VI, 1993
brass, copper, patina, Prismacolor
8 x 19 x 19"

My work is an arena where I examine personal concerns, commemorating the joyous revelations as well as the painful ones. The reference extends from the personal to draw parallels with the progress of the natural world. Observation of the inevitable change in the natural world makes me feel calmer about what is happening to me. Nature has always been greatly soothing for me, a great reliever of anxieties. It can weave its way through my defenses, putting things in perspective and bringing a degree of contentment and peace.

Patterns of growth and images I observed in nature have become metaphors for what concerns me on a personal level: the fragility of new growth displaying its resiliency and strength, existing beside fragments of nature past their prime, the perception of violence and beauty in the inevitable disintegration; the tenuous structure, the result of age and stress, tenaciously surviving despite the seeming withdrawal of nourishment.

In the last three years the symmetrical format has provided an element of stability for me, an instinctively understood point from which to start my journey. Double walled bowls examine the interaction between two layers, how much is hidden, how much is revealed, the state of suspension/tension between the walls. Recent work, influenced by my trip to Australia, is characterized by a softer, more sensuous form, stronger use of movement, gesture, and color which reflect a more optimistic and peaceful spirit.

Arrangement #1:
You Call That Work, 1994
hand-sawn copper, craft paint,
oak, poplar, auto paint
25 x 22 x 22"



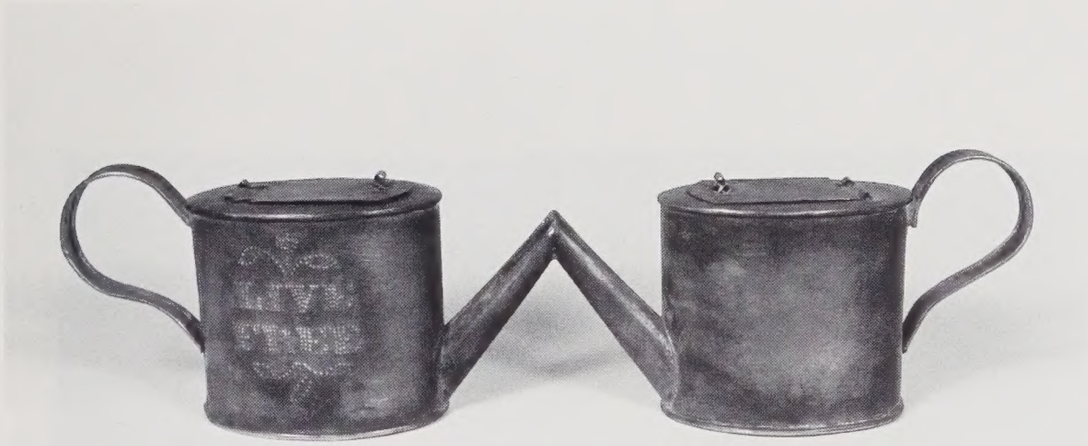
Arrangement #1:
You Call That Work, 1994, (detail)
Photographs by Dirk Bakker

Erika Ayala Stefanutti
West Bloomfield, Michigan

I find that my community values mental labor over physical or manual labor. As part of my work, I find it necessary to reflect on the social influences on the ways in which I think about my self and my work, and the ways in which the community interprets my making activities in the studio and in the home. Both art-making work and home-making work have similar physical-labor-intensive qualities that contribute to their marginalization within the dominant (dualist-based) tradition. Despite this similarity, I find that in art-making, labor and time investment (woman hours) are mythologized, while in home-making, labor is denied, or made to appear invisible. The objects I make, the ways in which I make them, and the ways in which they are presented, have to do with my efforts to negotiate the imposed fragmentation I feel towards my various making activities.

"We say there is no end to any act. The rock thrown in the water is followed by waves of water, and these waves of water make waves in the air, and these waves travel outward infinitely, setting particles in motion, leading to other motion and; motion upon motion endlessly. We say the water has noticed the stone falling and has not forgotten. And in every particle every act lives, and the stars do not frighten us, we say, starlight is familiar to us."

Susan Griffin, *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her,* 1978. New York, Harper & Row.



Jonathan Wahl
New Paltz, New York

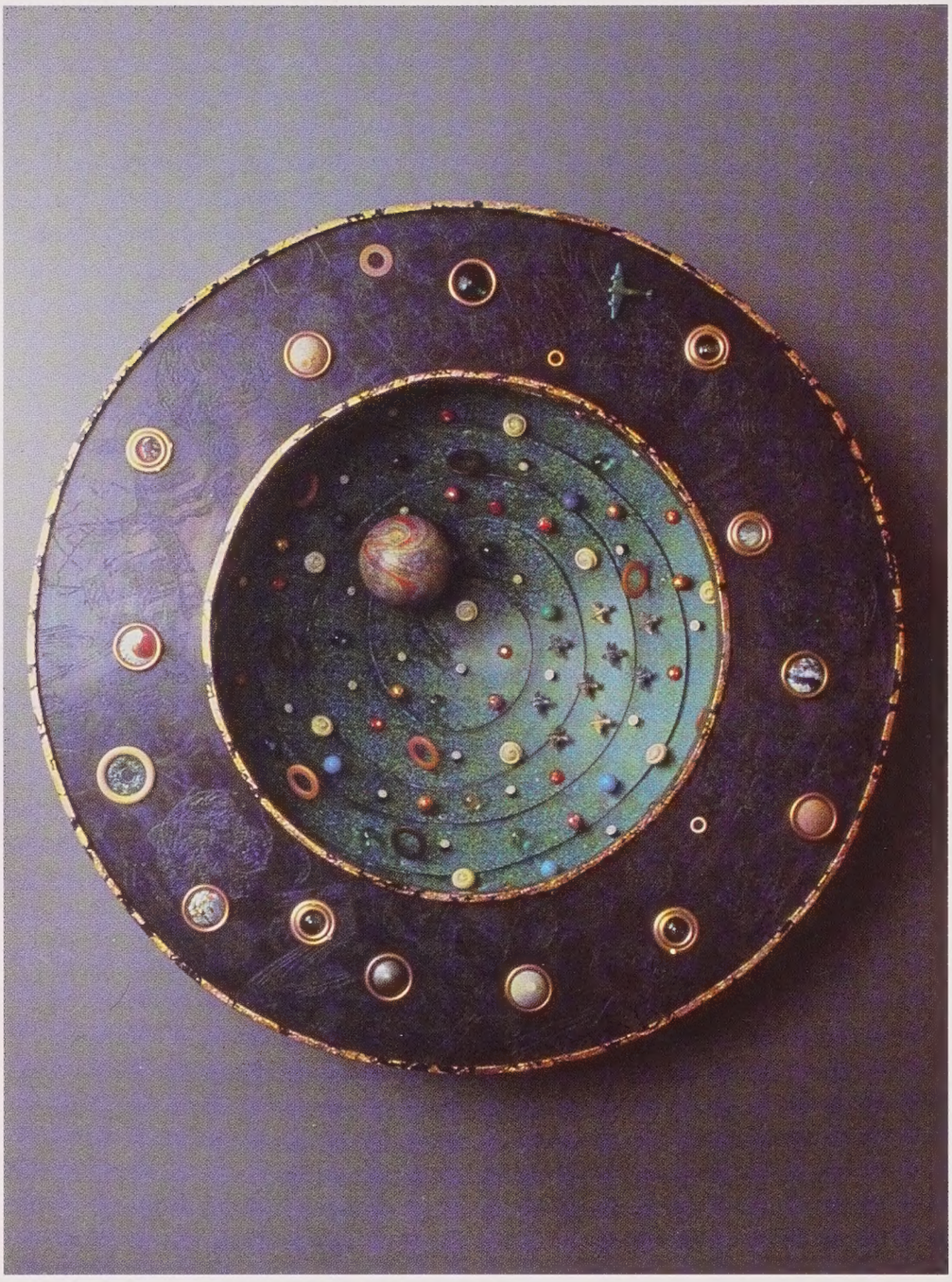
Live Free or Die, American Heritage Series,
Teapots, 1993, tin, 5 x 19 x 3"

The saying "Liberty, Harmony and Brotherly Love" expresses one of the ideals on which the United States was founded. We are told that it exists in American life today but it and many other such statements have been misconstrued or are applicable only if you meet certain qualifications. They have become American myths. I aim to challenge the existence or application of these "truths" by subverting the manner in which tin vessels work or function. By re-investing in the historical manufacture of tin objects I am attempting to create in my work the experience of irony and contradiction found in the reality of American life in comparison to its ideals. By critiquing the need these objects fill or did fill and decorating their surface with American "myths and slogans" I hope to transform these objects into another reality or layer a new, contemporary meaning onto their already historical relevance.

The tin industry both references our past as well as represents a familiar modern day industry. It has produced everything from cookie cutters and pails to funnels and cake molds. Many of us are familiar with our parents or grandparents old cake molds or automotive funnels as well as colonial lanterns. The combination of historical reference and contemporary familiarity that tinware embodies has led me to focus on it particularly.

Historically the products of local tinsmiths aided directly the actual development of the colonist or pioneer and in turn the physical and intellectual establishment of the U.S.. Without tin lanterns the colonist could not see, without the tin coffee pot the pioneer could not have as easily settled the American frontier. This environment of necessity and directness of function in which American tin forms were developed not only reflected these needs but also the radical political ideas of the American revolution. "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" was one of the many slogans that were circulating at the time of the Revolution and was carried with the pioneer, in their minds and sometimes on tinware, past the Appalachians.

It is my endeavor to re-contextualize these functions of early American tinware by altering or subverting their function with functions that convey my political agenda. In doing so it is my aim to create a "new reality" or understanding of these forms through an infusion of the ideas and ideals that were integral to their development with issues that are confronting our society today.



Chris Ramsay
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Starry, Starry Night, Wall piece, 1993
copper, rubber, glass, patina, glow-in-the-dark paints. 24" dia. x 12" depth

My energy and enthusiasm for making art begins outdoors as I travel gathering visual and physical elements of the environment. My observations and the found objects I collect provide a resource of information through which I can investigate ideas relating to my relationship with nature. The use of the found object serves as a metaphor for the cycle of erosion through which all life forms pass, including myself, the cycle of life to death to life."

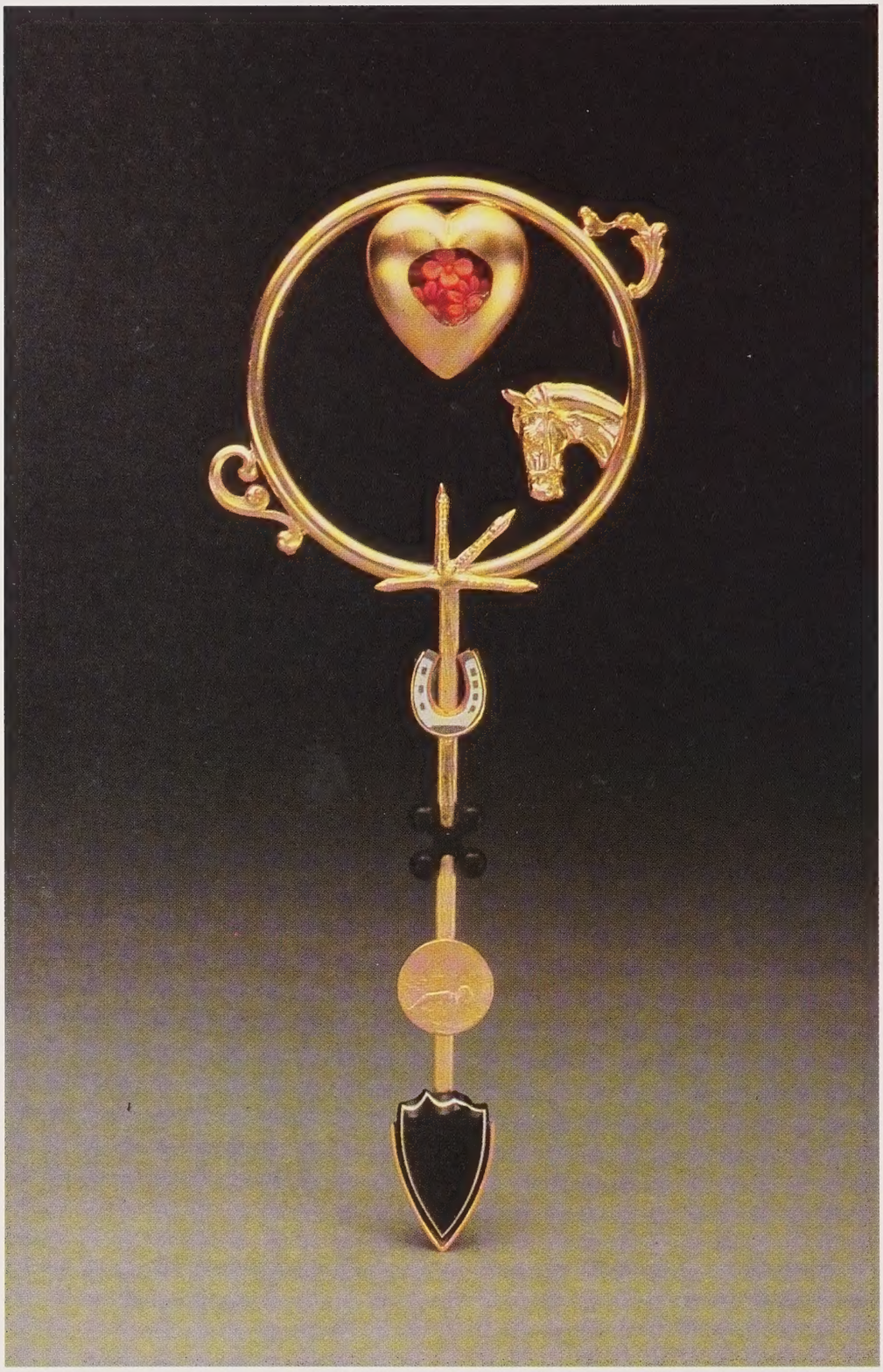
Sandra Sherman
Macungie, Pennsylvania

Venus and Cupid, Neckpiece in Box, 1993
mixed media, 15 x 8½ x 4¼"

I am working with themes relevant to the intimate sphere of jewelry – such as figures from literature which embody archetypal human dynamics, stereotypes, or ideals and collages of ornamental elements symbolic of our modern human queries and presumptions.

In my search for jewelry forms to express these themes I have been exploring unconventional compositions and material combinations. The boxes made for each piece give me the opportunity to determine the presentation of the piece when it is not being worn and to extend the "surface" of the piece. They also make the ritual of storing and wearing the piece more conscious.

After experience in production work and working for traditional goldsmiths, I was interested in trying to create some jewelry disregarding the concerns of the market, but utilizing the qualities of the format that I find intriguing and meaningful — its human scale, its semi-specific site, its sensuality — jewelry's potential as an object of personal meaning and communication in addition to its "function" as decoration and/or social symbol.



Alan Burton Thompson
North Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Secret Pointer, Brooch, 1992
24k plate, sterling, steel, onyx, copper, enamel, found objects, 5½ x 1¼"

My current work deals with sentiment, emotion, and idealism as essential qualities of human experience. My brooches are meant to act as metaphors and reminders of the values and beliefs that sustain hope, strength, and perseverance.

I make brooches to express my ideas because of the potential jewelry has for interaction and intimacy with the viewer. My brooches are objects and people place great power and significance in objects. The materials and found objects I use have a history and meaning that are inherent to and are woven into their origins. I attempt to use this combination of meanings and histories to create a complex dialogue of relationships that are revealing and affirming.

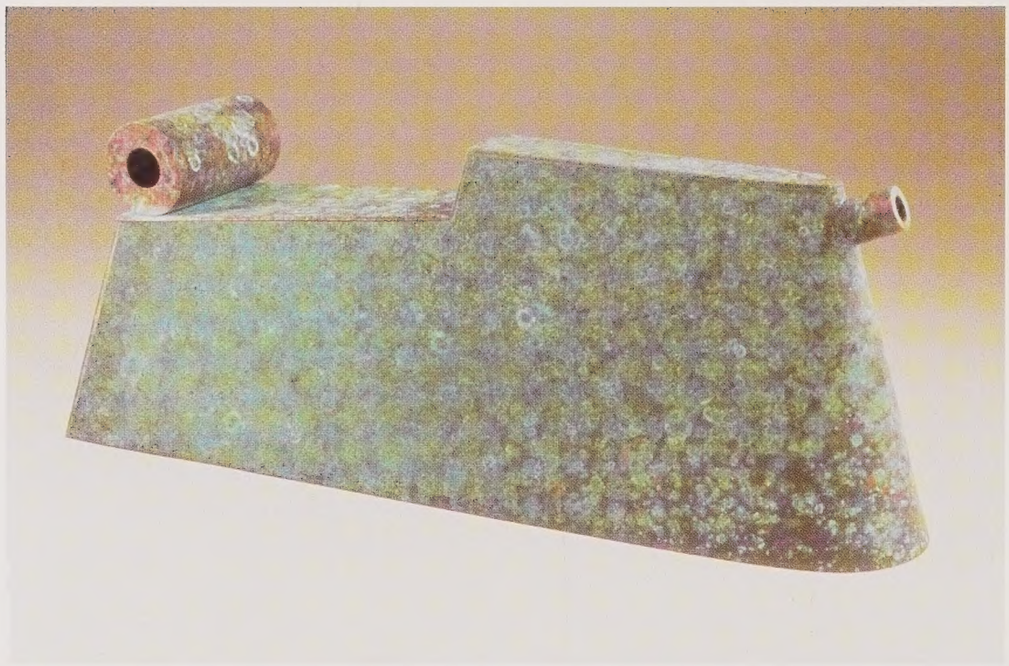
Secret Pointer addresses luck, chance and the importance of remaining strong in the face of adversity.

Laura Marth
Millville, New Jersey

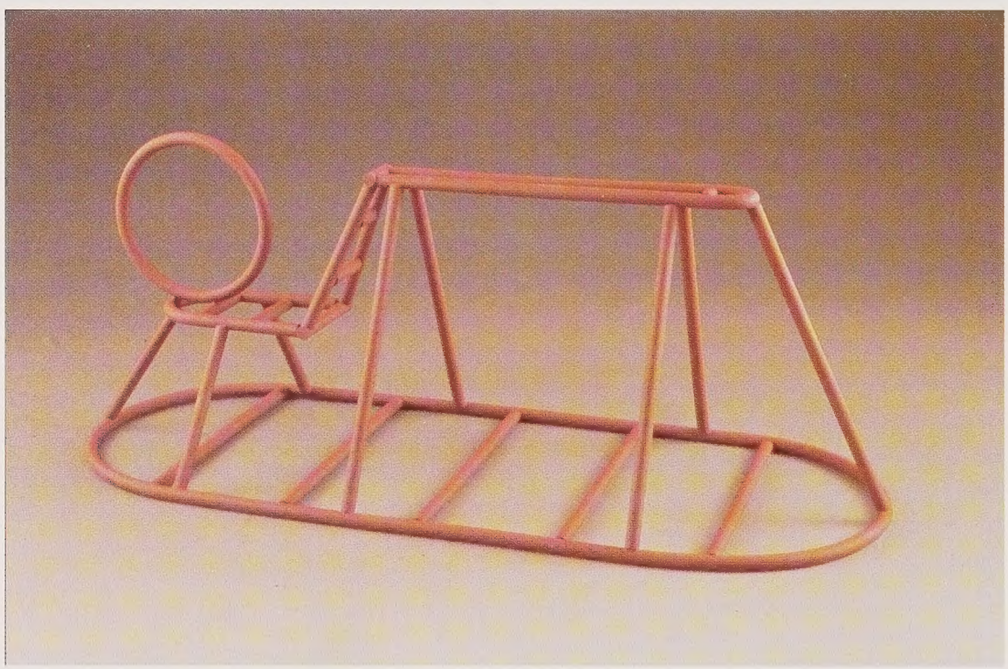
Juicy Fruits, Perfume Bottle, 1993
anodized aluminum, 9 x 3 x 3"

All of the pieces that I am currently working on are made of aluminum which has been lathe turned, and then carved with a band saw and flexible shaft. The pieces are finished completely, colored and then assembled.

I have been working with the idea of translating the images of memory and subconscious dream imagery into small functional objects. Function, real or implied is essential to me as it asks for interaction. The scale I choose initiates an intimacy and close inspection. The imagery, I hope, connects with parts of a person's own memory and emotion. Within the field of anodizing I am interested in the effects of light and its interaction with color, as well as its effects on a form.



Butte #C – 2, Teapot, 1993
copper, 4½ x 9¾ x 2½"



Butte #L – 10, Teapot, 1993
yellow brass, 3 x 8 x 3¼"

Billie Jean Theide
Champaign, Illinois

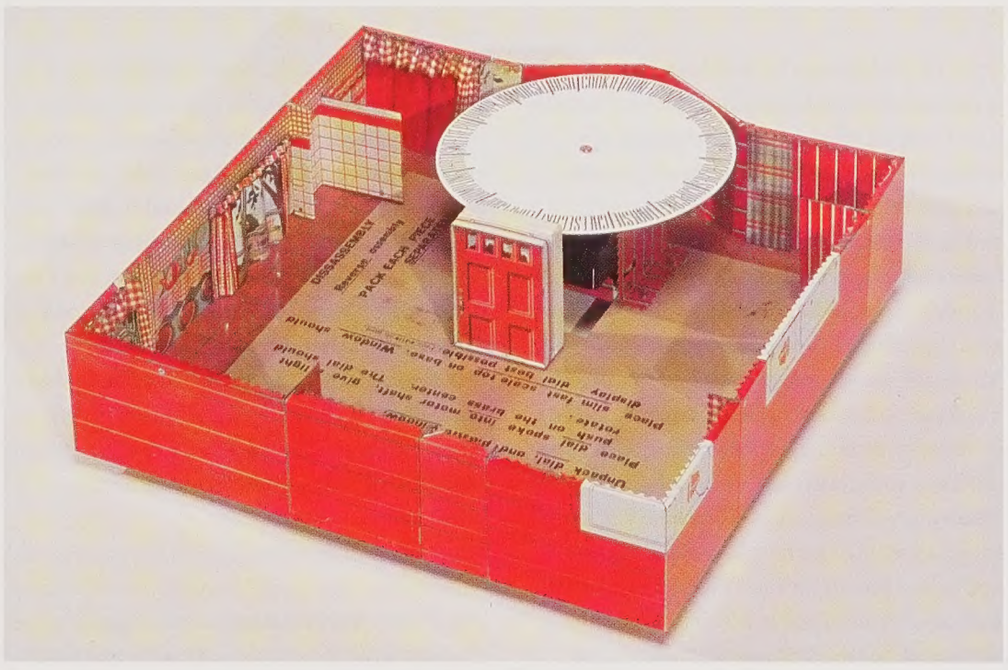
Currently, my energies are directed at designing and fabricating objects and wearables in copper, brass, sterling silver, and aluminum. Conceptually, the work is a conscious response to spiritual and physical journeys and explorations-records of personal thoughts and recollections, autobiographical in nature. The pieces refer to the nature of specific relationships, where ideally aesthetics, concept, and function become one.

The most recent body of work, a series of fabricated teapots, are the result of direct observations of the western and southwestern landscape. The pieces are an autobiographical record or account of numerous visual experiences. My intent is to provoke monumentalism (in spite of scale), timelessness, and mystery. While the reference is specifically to land formations, the forms are also suggestive of flat irons, tugs, and ironclads.

Harriete Estel Berman
San Mateo, California

Hourglass Figure — the scale of torture, 1994
printed steel, Plexiglas window,
plastic dial, battery powered motor, lettering
3 x 12½ x 13"

Hourglass Figure – the scale of torture, 1994,
(detail)



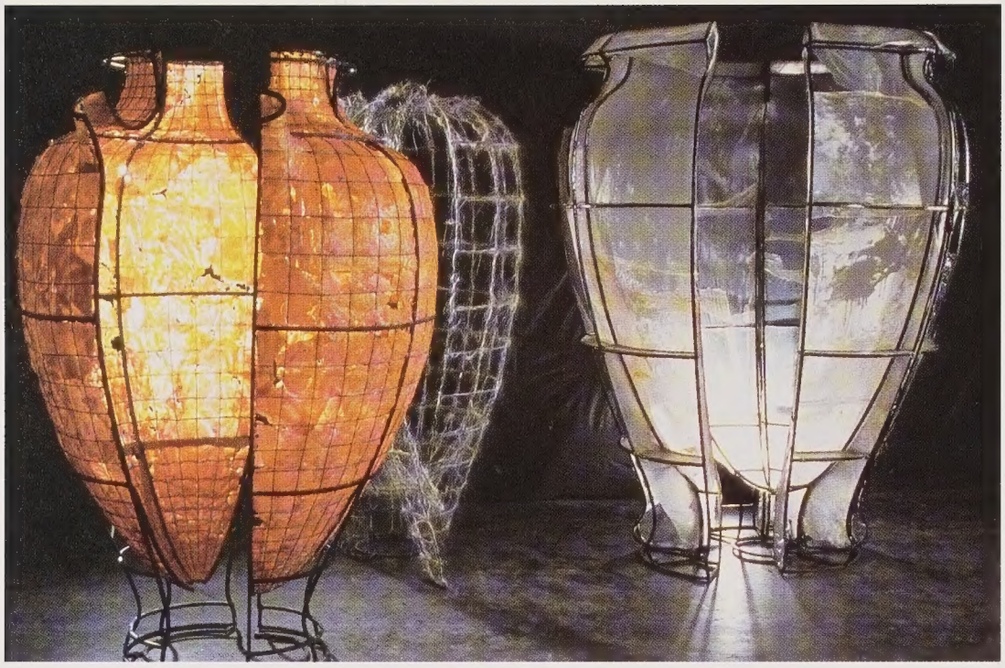
My recent work is a series titled *A Pedestal for a Woman to Stand On.* The minimal cube shape is a formal self-imposed restriction representing a formal sculptural approach. A square also represents my home, and the toy houses (similar to those I remember playing with as a child) which I use to fabricate these pieces. These pieces of a "home" are an effort to reconstruct my life. They symbolize both the autobiographical content and the complexity of women's lives in today's society.

A square is also the building block of most quilt patterns. These pedestals use traditional quilt patterns to make a visual connection to quilts, historically one of the few creative outlets for women. The name of each quilt pattern is chosen to add content to each pedestal, as well.

Hourglass Figure - the scale of torture, continues to evolve from issues that are both autobiographical and revolve around concerns of all woman in our society. The form is modeled after a domestic bathroom scale. The printed steel images were cut from unformed sheets of slim fast cans contrasted with cookie images from cookie tins.

The edges were cut with pinking shears (a reference to fabric) and turned up so that even the thought of standing on this scale would be extra painful – as if standing on a scale isn't painful enough already. The quilt pattern used is based on an hourglass variation, a visual pun on the stereotype of a woman's figure.

The inside is the part that very few people see; it is a reflection of my domestic sphere trimmed with autobiographical content. Endless daily routine revolves....



Kim Cridler
Los Angeles, California

Jar Series, 1993
steel, beeswax, hair, silk, honey, 8' x 5½'

The physical process of working with metal has obviously been dictated by the essential characteristics of metal – strength, malleability, conductivity, ability to assume and hold form and volume, reflective ability. These characteristics, however, are more than physical features or technical agendas, they are inseparable from historical, sociological, and theoretical conditions. Material facts present the value of metal to humankind and become self-explanatory in the history of the use of metal in utilitarian objects – tools, weapons, vessels, currency, jewelry, precious objects. The history of the formats assumed by metals and the uses and values placed on such formats can be transcribed into an inherent history of human needs and desires. For me, this history, the reading of these cultural codes and structures, is inseparable and essential to metals as a field and a means to making art.

I am invested in utilizing the inherent subject matter within the objects we make, within the materials, formats, histories, experiences we claim. I acknowledge tensions as being significant to my understanding of this field, namely the tension between the physical and the intellectual and its underlying binary structure of meaning and value which informs the fine art/craft polarization as well as other hierarchies within our culture such as:

domestic (interior) – public, corporate
authoritarian – vernacular
structure – decoration

My current work, articulated through the format of the vessel – a structure of containment, storage, and collection – is meant to introduce a sense of the physical or the experiential as resourced through the implication of utility. These vessels present a formal and conceptual tension of structure and skin, meaning and material; through girded steel and natural materials which are at once indicative of sensual wealth and the intensive labor of natural functional structures such as the honeycomb, silk cocoons, or a coat of hair. Other materials imply the maintenance and preservation of the domestic realm; such as soap, paraffin wax, and mothballs.

The tensions of interpretation hold my focus on formats which can result in contradictory readings. The container, that it may hold and protect or may imprison, posses and restrict; that a gate, a tool of access but oftentimes considered a beautiful ornament can from another point of view become a offensive barricade; that a handle or spout, grants you access to a volume within while simultaneously maintaining a physical and sensual distance. It maintains and directs. Such tensions of desire may be seen as a romantic "art" subject, a subject which is however invested in and contributing to the ordinary yet extraordinary role played by utilitarian objects throughout history.

Douglas Harling
Penland, North Carolina

Wine Into Water, Brooch, 1993
22k, lapis, garnet, 1½ x 2½ x ¼"

As a metalsmith my primary focus is on jewelry. I have a great interest in Ancient and Historical Metalwork. I use this research to create layers of meaning and associations in my own work. The comparative study of different traditions illuminates not only human constants but the evolution of social and cultural meaning. While some references may be to the past, it is important that the pieces remain both personal and contemporary in nature. By integrating cultural and technical quotes I can shift the original context and create a new and relevant dialogue.

As a means of integrating visual imagery and technical process, I have concentrated on using eutectic fusion/granulation techniques. Granulation is an ancient method of fusing precious metal to itself. It has provided a direct technical reference to the past and a means of exploiting the innate properties of gold and silver. By using granulation, I am able to build images with a sense of detail and delicacy that are the delight of small scale work.

Visual imagery combined with the permanence, value, and purity of the material are integral parts of my work. I have consistently sought to imbue each piece with a distilled and rarefied aura. There has always been the need for personal fetishes of real worth and beauty, but vanity alone is not the justification. These are objects to commemorate one's personal, social, and cultural rites of passage. Their immutability is as much a testament to the human spirit as to the objects themselves.

Allison Macgeorge
North Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Untitled, Brooch, 1994
electroformed copper, enamel
5½ x 1 x ⅞"

I am interested in creating jewelry that is abstracted yet ties to various forms in nature as well as to my own personal history. There are aspects of my brooches that are rationalized and others that remain intuitive, This layering of information hopefully adds a sense of mystery and ambiguity to the work.

While creating this body of work, I have been preoccupied with a specific three-dimensional form that I personally imagine to be figurative. These forms are elongated and usually suggest a head, torso, tail, or skirt. My involvement with this abstracted figure may be connected with my interest in historical costumes and perhaps earlier ballet training. However, these forms are not singularly related to the figure. They have amorphous qualities which may suggest the relationship to the form of a pod, flower, or sea creature. It is my intention that this interaction between a figure and a plant-like form arouse curiosity in the viewer through its obscure nature.

Today, the introduction of the electroformer into the metals studio has allowed the jeweler to create larger forms that are very light in weight and quite wearable. Most of my work is made with this technology. My brooches range in size from five to nine inches in length and two inches in width. I feel this size is appropriate because it suggests a relationship to recognizable forms of similar size such as a doll or a small vase with flowers.

Coloration with enamels and gold leaf acts as a vehicle to impart character on the work. It is my intention that as the enamel interacts with the form it does not become a statement in itself, but a necessary part of the whole.

It is my hope that through stance, gesture, and coloration, a subtle personality or inner spirit is revealed in each brooch.

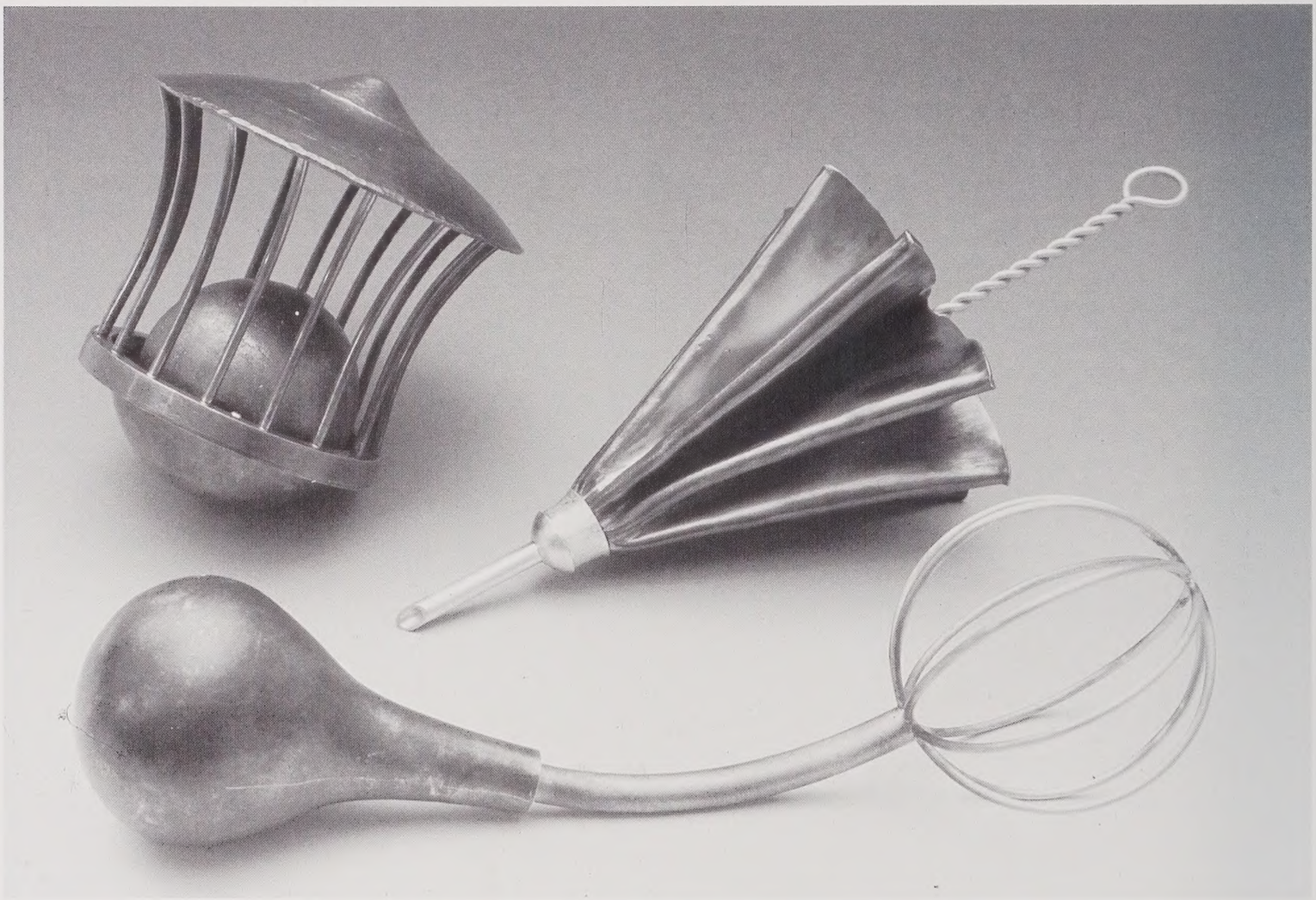
Marjorie Schick
Pittsburg, Kansas

Necklace, 1993
painted paper-mache, wood
23¾ x 23 x 6"

My work is a sculptural statement which is complete when off the figure yet is constructed and exists because of the human body. I am intrigued by the idea that the human body is capable of carrying large objects, both physically and visually; therefore, I often construct forms in a scale which puts the work into the category of body sculpture rather than jewelry.

There are five major aspects to my work: the constructed three-dimensional form, the color relationships, the definition of space, the combination of patterns, and the scale of the objects in relationship to the human figure. My goal is to create a sense of visual tension among the formal elements of each object, such as from line to plane, from color to value, from one directional force to another, or from the rhythms in the structure to the rhythms in the colors. Each object is studied and worked in totality, no part being any less important than any other.

I refer to the linear constructions as three-dimensional drawings to wear and to the newer works consisting primarily of planes as paintings to wear. I hope that as objects they seem to be "alive" with aesthetic presence. The motivation for the work is never to fit into any trend but rather the work is done out of a passion for creating, for trying to do something significant.



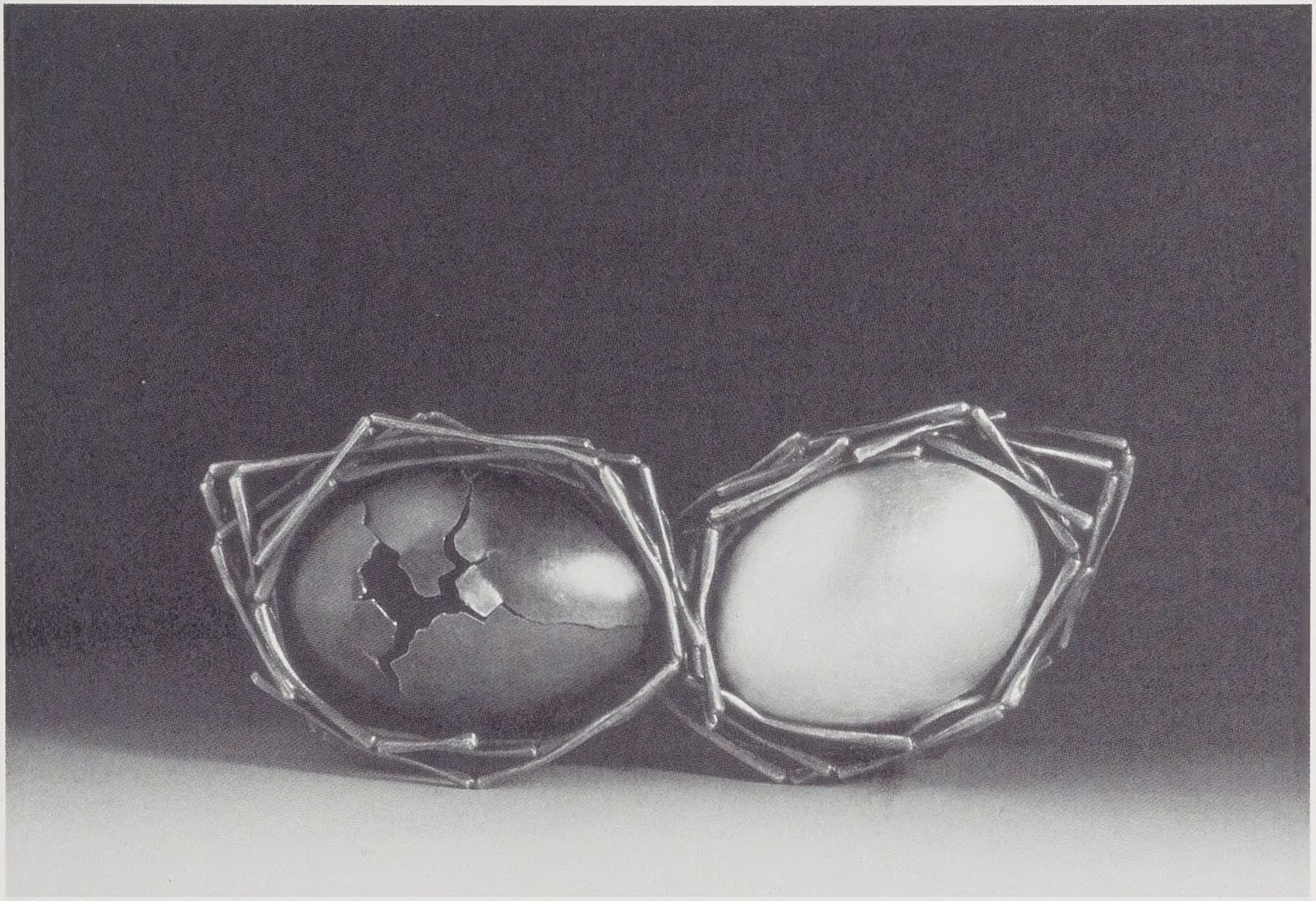
Todd Noe
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Greatest Show on Earth
Spit Spot
Very Mashed Potatoes, 1994
bronze, copper, silver, nickel
approx.: 5 x 6 x 4"

My work is about provoking memories and associations through visual objects.

These objects lead the viewer to question where they may have come from and what or how they may have been used. The audience brings with them their own recollections enabling them to enjoy and understand the work.

The references to machine parts, toys, hand tools, and nautical devices are apparent.



Robin Kraft
Ravenna, Ohio

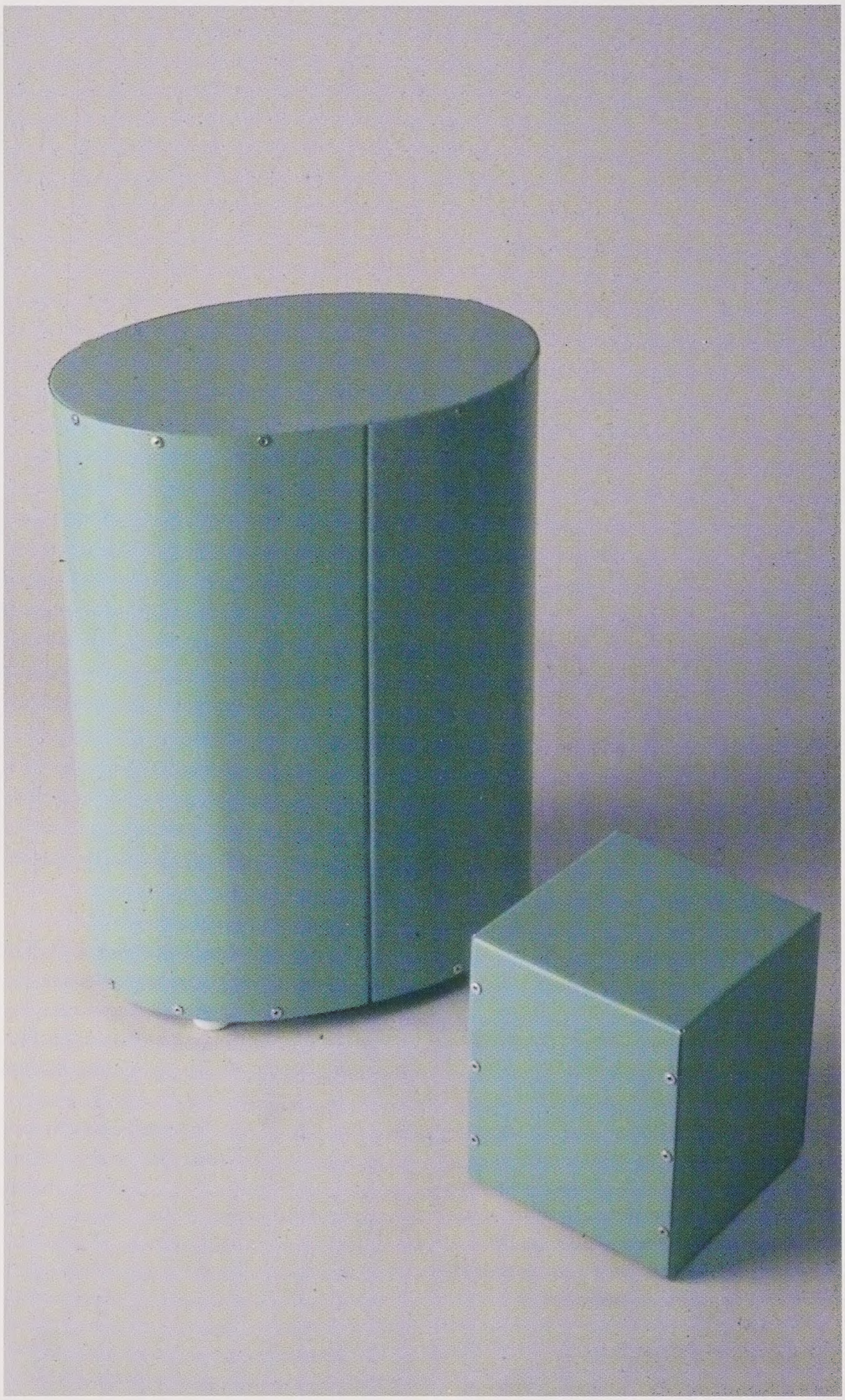
Encroachment, 1993
sterling, 1½ x 4⅛ x 1"

In my most recent work, I play with seeing, perception and the visual transmission of ideas. I have long been interested in ambiguity and the possibilities facilitated by the overlap of images. Recent brooches make reference to eyes and glasses as a metaphor for seeing and understanding.

The nest pieces come from musings about the nature of influence and the transfer of visual ideas. Those of us who are receptive to visual stimuli absorb images which then incubate and transform in our brains.

The pieces which employ color and Venn diagram imagery overlapping with eye and glasses imagery allude to seeing more clearly but also to making distinctions or classifications. They refer to the paradox of striving for objective understanding without being able to achieve it.

The works which contain references to magnifying lenses or loupes and fractured or broken eggs are about self-examination as a response to a threat to one's vision of life and perceptions of the world.



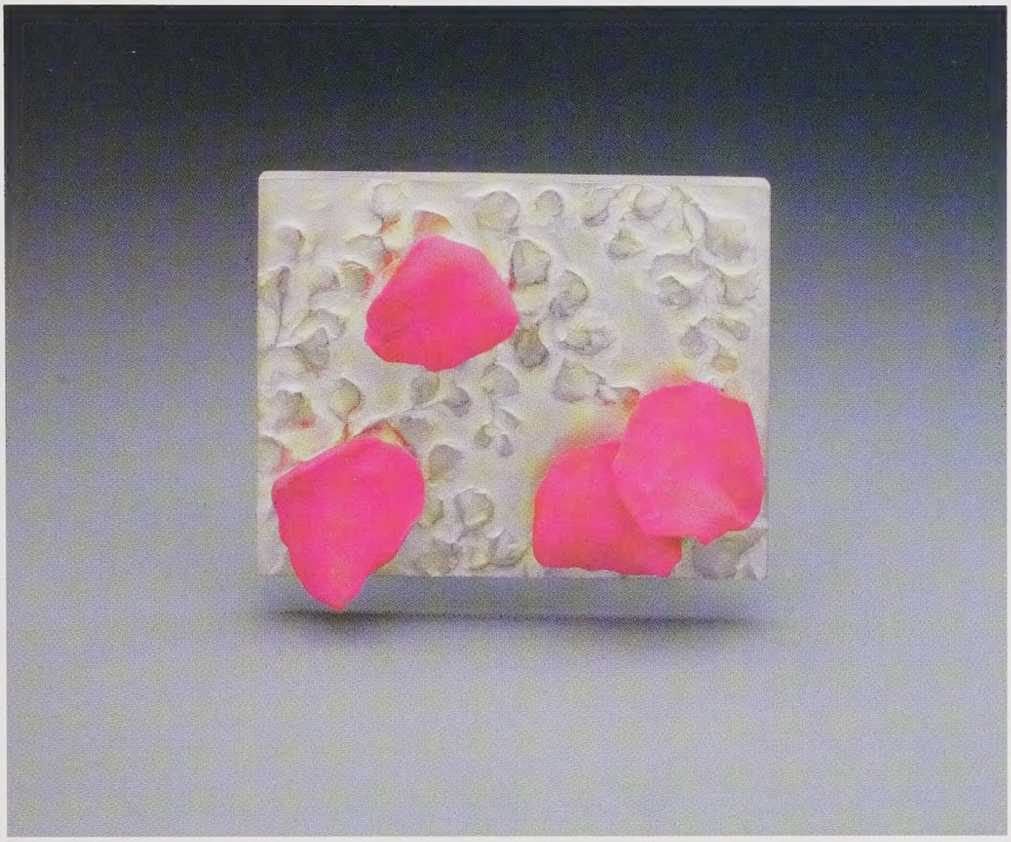
Lisa Norton
Chicago, Illinois

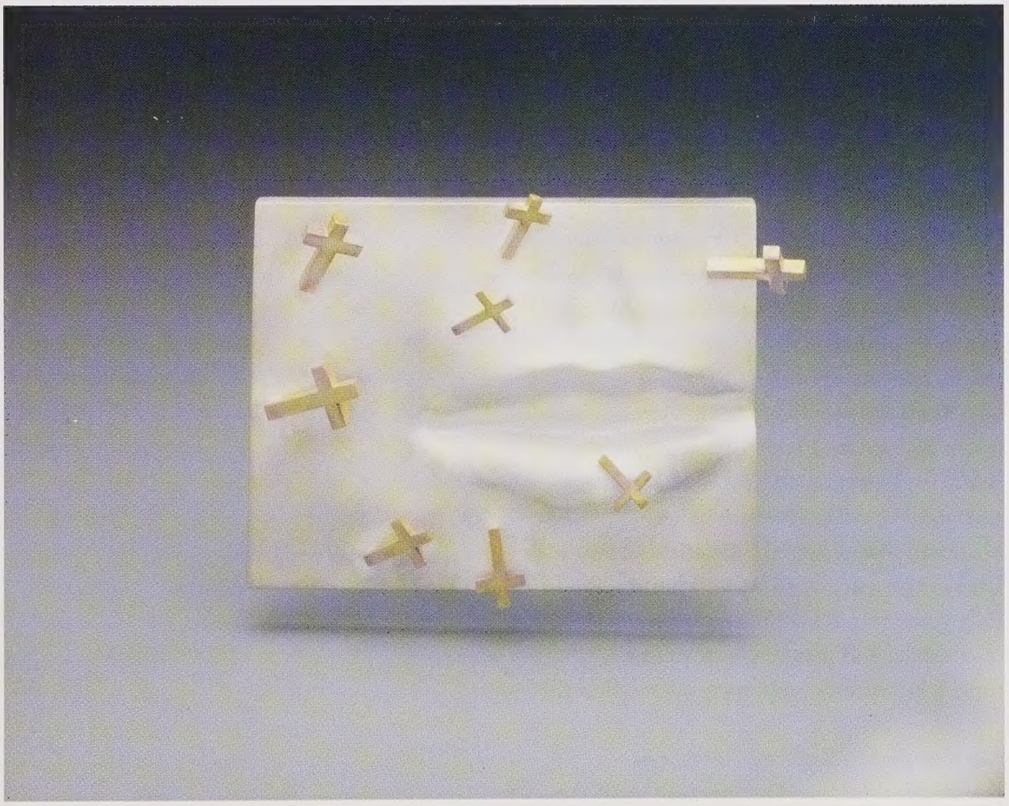
Turn and Retrieve, 1993
pre-painted steel
13 x 10 x 8" and 5½ x 4½ x 4½"

I have been studying the hand-crafted metal object and traditional processes such as tinsmithing and riveting which have their origins in early industrial society. My hand-crafted "projects" are parodies of utilitarian objects such as tin pails, wastebaskets and heating ducts.

Utilitarian objects, specifically those with domestic overtones and the residue of repeated use (and thus memory), often derive from the history of the Decorative Arts and invention. They provoke responses quite unlike sculptural forms. Vernacular forms of metalworking such as sheet metal work which is associated with the trade unions and the heating and air conditioning industry have intrigued me with their formulaic plans and diagrams.

I adapted this male methodology to my needs. Sheet metal work involves a set of mathematical methods for *layout* and *stretchout.* Both are methods for transforming a 3-dimensional volume into a series of flat shapes. This flattening of the form bears a strong resemblance to dressmaking. Recently I have been adding another layer to the idea by building the hollow duct sections in preprinted sheet metal. Wood grain printed steel is an ideal material; in addition to being culturally familiar as the ubiquitous covering of microwave ovens, it is a camouflage. I have expanded upon this idea with heating ducts with reflective mirrored surfaces. By laminating an image or veneer upon the forms, a 2-dimensional system is superimposed upon the 3-dimensional system of sheet metal fabrication.



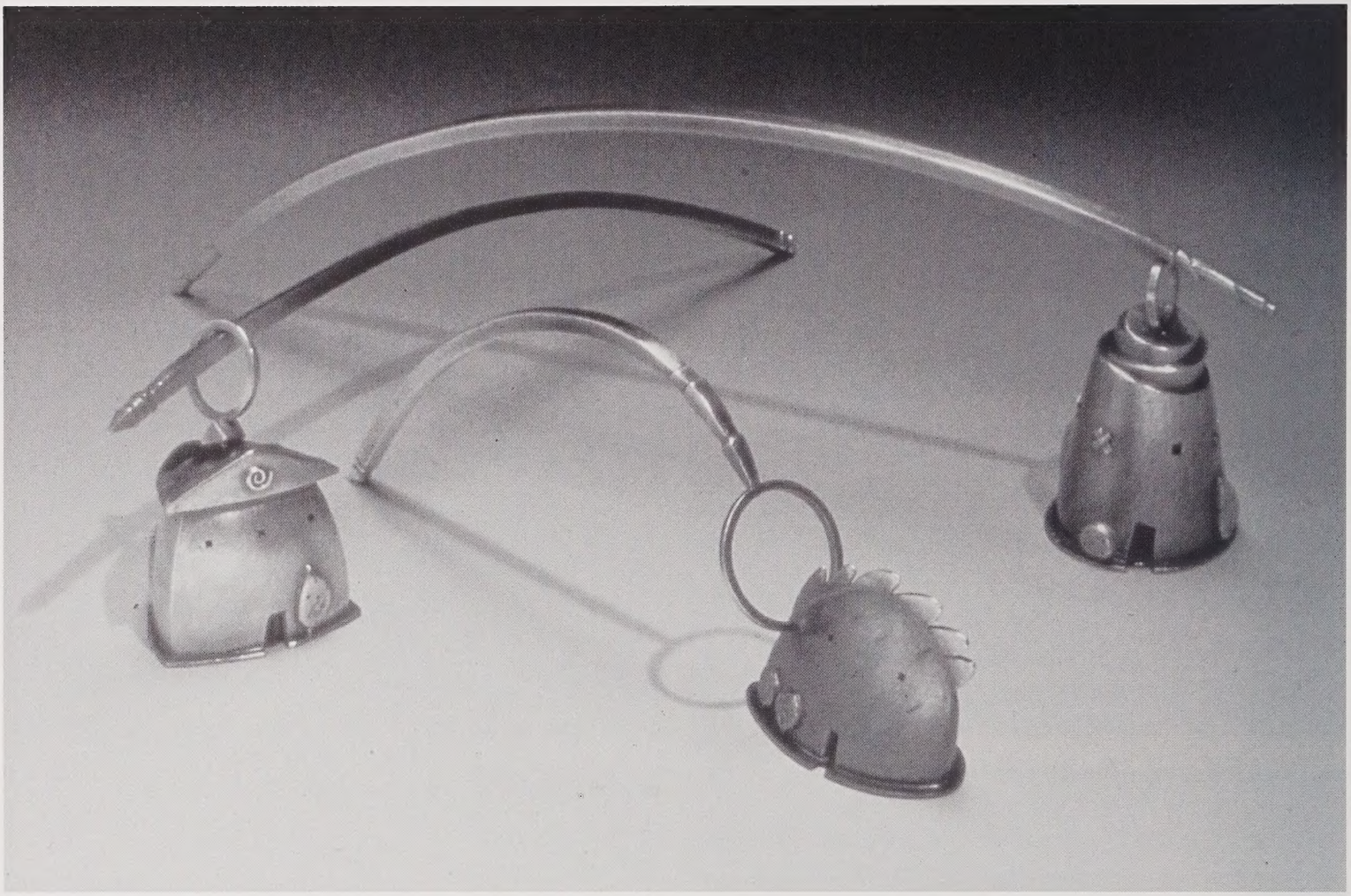


Daniel Jocz
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TOP
Song Series: Just Like Spring Rain, Brooch, 1994
fine silver, sterling, polymer clay, pigment
2 x 2⅜ x ¾"
Photographs by Dean Powell

BOTTOM
Song Series: Nightingales, Brooch, 1994
fine silver, sterling, 14k
2 x 2¾ x ½"

My new exploration is in the brooch genre. Beginning this new direction with the *Sketch Book Series*, which were anecdotal studies, I worked the metal in simple ways – drilling, piercing, bending-then adding surface embellishments such as paint. The *Screen Series* (series of 4) is a continuation of this elementary way of working only containing a much simpler concept. They are simply screens with polymer clay forms playing across them. For the last several years my work has begun to incorporate more organic forms and at the same time I've been leaving geometric abstraction behind. I am beginning to explore broader themes. The *Songs Series* of brooches is my latest. Repoussé brooches, they are a personal response to life forces and mortality. The repoussé process, moving the metal in such plastic ways, and the brooch format, are allowing me much new room to explore these new themes.

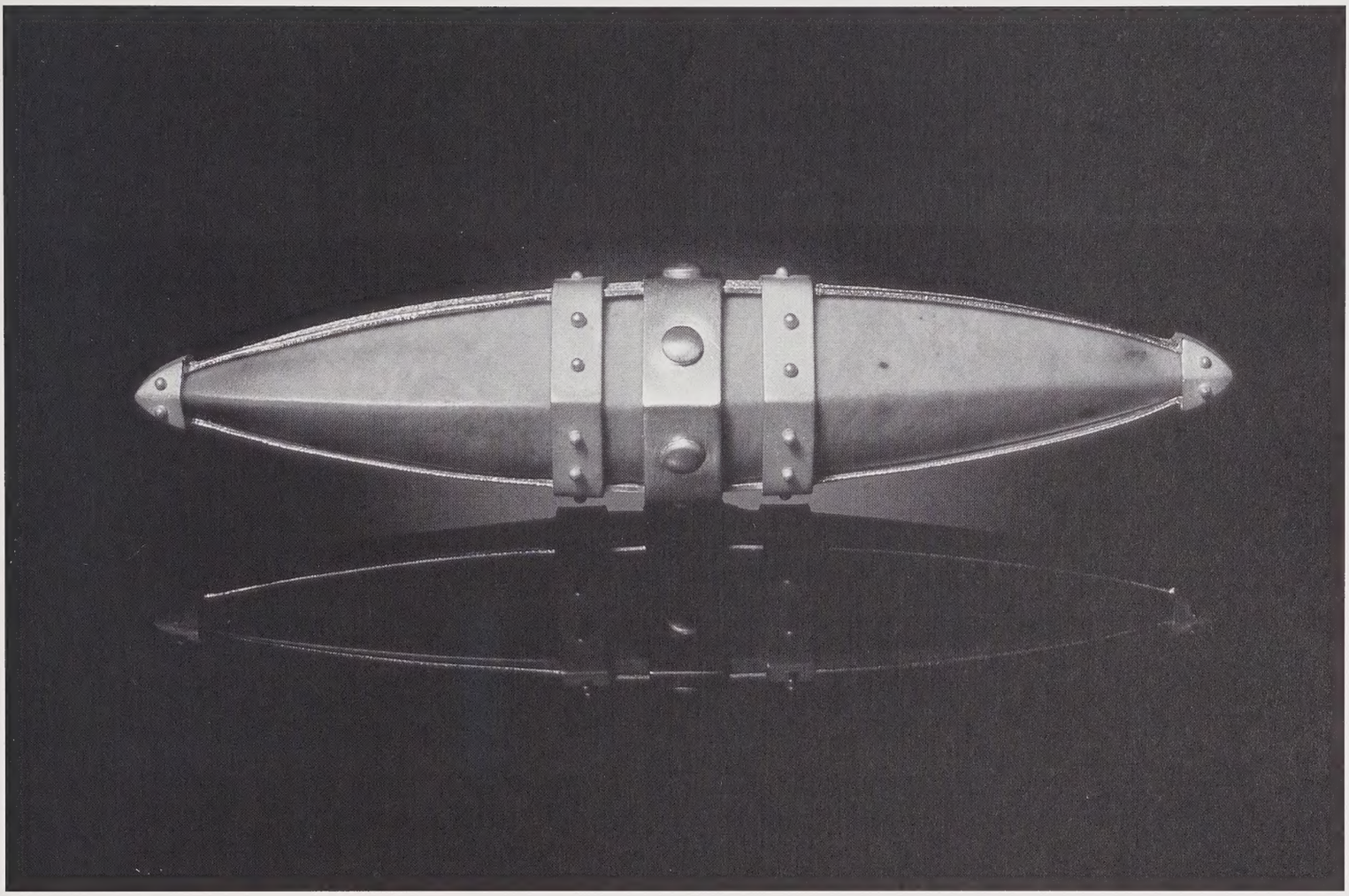


Marilyn G. da Silva
Pinole, California

Put Out the Fire I – III, Candle Snuffers, 1993
sterling, 2½ x 6 x 1" (average size)

The series of candle snuffers entitled *Put the Fire Out* is a direct emotional response to having been burned out of our house on March 23, 1993. Disasters have a way of forcing one to reaffirm priorities. Being strong afterwards does not seem to be a choice, but rather a necessity. I felt like I never got a chance to reflect on the loss of things that were surrounding me for so many years, so I made some pieces to remember them. Also, the whole experience of claiming what is rightfully yours through an insurance company was educational and deflating at the same time. These candle snuffers speak to all of this.

Put Out the Fire I–III were done one month after the fire. The function of all these pieces was as conceptually important as the imagery. *I* shows the house on fire. *II* is the house after the fire. And *III* is our dream house.



Lilly Fitzgerald
Spencer, Massachusetts

Raziel's Wing, Pin, 1993
22k, serpentine, 1½ x 3¼ x 1"

My recent work is a reflection of the eclectic visual information I am exposed to. The images constantly being fed to me via architecture, nature, and history go thru some built in system in my head which scans, blends, and stores it for me to tap into.

Stones and their color are the ground floor for my designs, so using my stored and distorted information I begin to build.

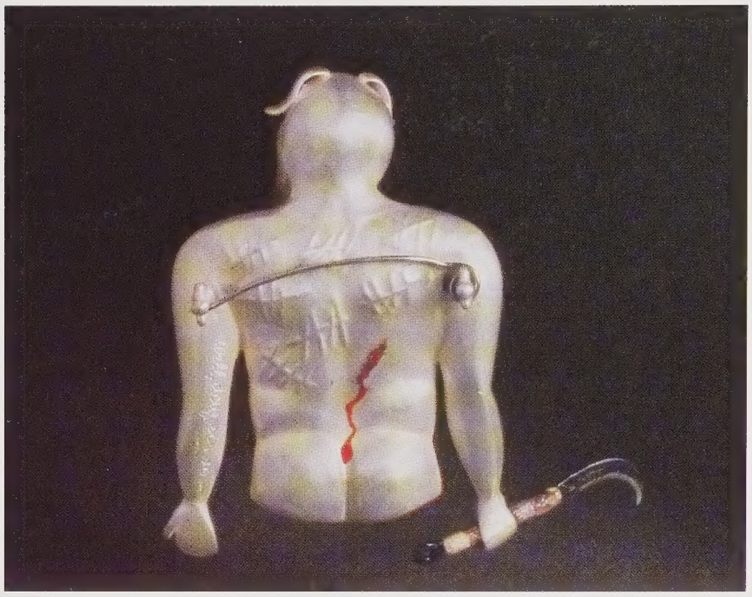
Rebekah Laskin
New York, New York

Enamel Brooch, 1993
enamel on copper, 24k, 18k, onyx,
epoxy resin, 4½ x ¾ x ¼"

My interest in enameling began with a desire to incorporate a drawing sensibility with the intimate scale of wearable jewelry. I found in enamel a vehicle for color, line, shape and surface as well as qualities of luminescence and preciousness.

These brooches are fabricated of etched copper and enameled in many fine layers allowing the surface image to evolve in a very intuitive manner.

As an enamelist, I attempt to find a balance between control of, and respect for, my material. As an artist, I aim to create small, evocative, three-dimensional paintings which function as wearable works of art.



Keith A. Lewis
Seattle, Washington

LEFT
Well Doug, It's 36 Now ...,
(Self Portrait in Memory of Doug Desimone),
Pin, 1994
sterling, steel, paint, willow
2¾ x 1⅞ x ¾"

RIGHT
Well Doug, It's 36 Now ...,
(Self Portrait in Memory of Doug Disimone),
(Rear View)

For a time, my work had been almost exclusively self referential. A number of self-portraits addressed feelings of loss and grief, of incompleteness and self-created obstructions. The central dilemma for me has been the familiar comfort of familiar pain – the fond, reliable ache of self-fulfilling prophecies. The satisfaction of feeling lousy.

I've tried, sometimes with humor, to carve off some of that anxiety, reiteration, and longing and to try to see strengths and weaknesses that those emotions and actions embody. The work helps me to commemorate grief while chastising self-pity. If, after the making, those doubts and fears seem familiar to others as well, then the pieces can serve a wider function.

In some way or another all my work comes out of my perspectives and experiences as a Queer man. My sexuality is the central, defining fact in my life. The strengths it has forced me to build and the challenges it has posed have created the lens through which I look.

In that lens I see that now, forevermore, HIV hovers over our heads. As a Queer man – along with my fellow-travelers, both positive and negative – I have been up to my knees in death for over a decade now. Loss is a constant ringing in our ears and the landscape is not conducive to love. I was tired from political work, attending funerals, writing down memories, entering the bedroom armed and suited-up for battle. I was tired of making lists – of filling holes with words.

It was time then, to explore the commemorative nature of jewelry; a practice with long-established roots, whereby mourning was validated and made public. Reminders of mortality, enshrined mementos and relics, outward manifestations of grief and loss were common elements of western jewelry for millennia prior to the 20th century. Now, in the culture of the quick fix and the power of positive thinking, grief is supposed to be silent and short. But loss is tragic, and grief hurts. . . and pain is an affront. Further, the sorts of relationships that I wish to see commemorated are not recognized as valid by our heterosexist culture – so the mainstream (but archaic) tradition of *memento mori* can be resurrected to validate dis-valued relationships and discounted grief.

That is the work I am currently engaged in. I can commemorate what I feel: the anger at missed chances, the holes in the crowd around me, the waste, the fading memories (what *was* his last name, his favorite color, his lifelong dream?), the being left (miraculously, arbitrarily) alive, the death of my community, . . . the acres of loss. If I'm careful . . . if I do it right, I can remember my friends.

Richelle P. Post
State College, Pennsylvania

Cayeux, Vase, 1992
sterling, 13 x 5¼ x 3¾"

LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

Let me decipher you
the message of my
flow'rs:
The rose means
"love", the violet
"I am true".
Thus speak the lea-
ves that garland
fair Virginia's
bow'rs:
"In sunshine and
in grief I cling
to you".

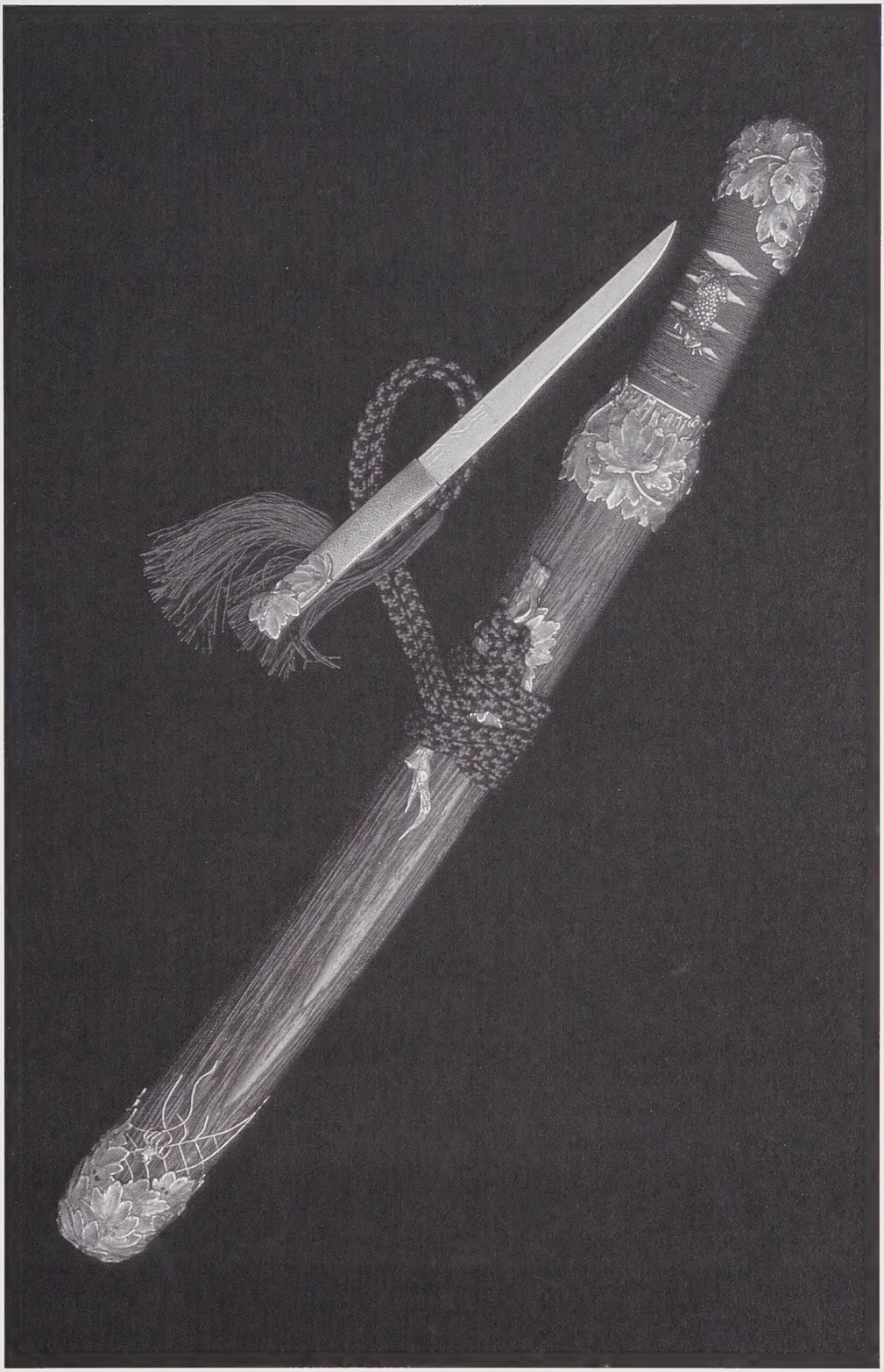
C. Preston-Wynne

When I was a little girl, I had a deep affection for picking and giving flowers to a neighbor lady who lived behind us. All of her children were grown and no longer lived at home. She and I were the best of friends, and she made me feel as though these small bunches of flowers were the greatest gift she had ever received. (Half the time they came from her own yard.) For my first communion she bought me a bud vase, which I still have. We moved away from that neighborhood when I was eleven and the following year my friend died from cancer. Although I had drifted away from her, she always remained in my thoughts. To this day when I see violets, I think of her and remember a time when life was sweet.

It was my intent with the two vases, *Feuille* and *Cayeux*, to create vessels that would not only complement flowers but also stand on their own. These pieces are straight forward and functional. I chose to make them in sterling silver because of the beauty of the metal. With the work there is an intertwining of my past and present interests. I look at my work as a three dimensional diary marking events or memories in my life.

Jim Kelso
Worcester, Vermont

Maple Leaf Tanto,
Japanese Style Short Sword, 1992
wenge wood, sterling, 18k, silk
18 x 1½ x 1"



At the present time, I mainly produce one-of-a-kind work in metals, wood, gems, fossil-ivory and vitreous enamel. My skills include a mix of European and Japanese techniques including fabrication, carving, casting, engraving, repoussage, enameling, and patination. My personal style reflects a blend of European and Oriental influence. Currently I am producing edged weapons (in collaboration with several of the world's finest forging bladesmiths), netsuke, jewelry, small containers, and other small objects.

The inspiration and subject matter for my work are often derived very directly from nature. I am continually awe stricken by the ineffable beauty of nature. Rather than try to depict an exact replica of nature, I strive to portray some small natural relationship. It is my attempt to capture and convey an aspect of the mystery I have felt in natural settings. I admire the Japanese appreciation of beauty in the ordinary and unrefined.

I feel strongly the importance of mastering the basic skills of a craft before there can be artistic improvisation. I am fascinated by technical process, but it is important to me to keep this sublimated to the artistic expression of my work.

Combining materials to achieve color and textural contrasts is something that I find intriguing. Precious materials are used for their visual and textural qualities rather than commercial value.

Julia Barello

Mesilla, New Mexico

TOP

Adornments: Cellulitis of Neck, Necklace, 1994,
(installation detail)
lithograph, silver, 24k, birch, 74 x 16 x 24"

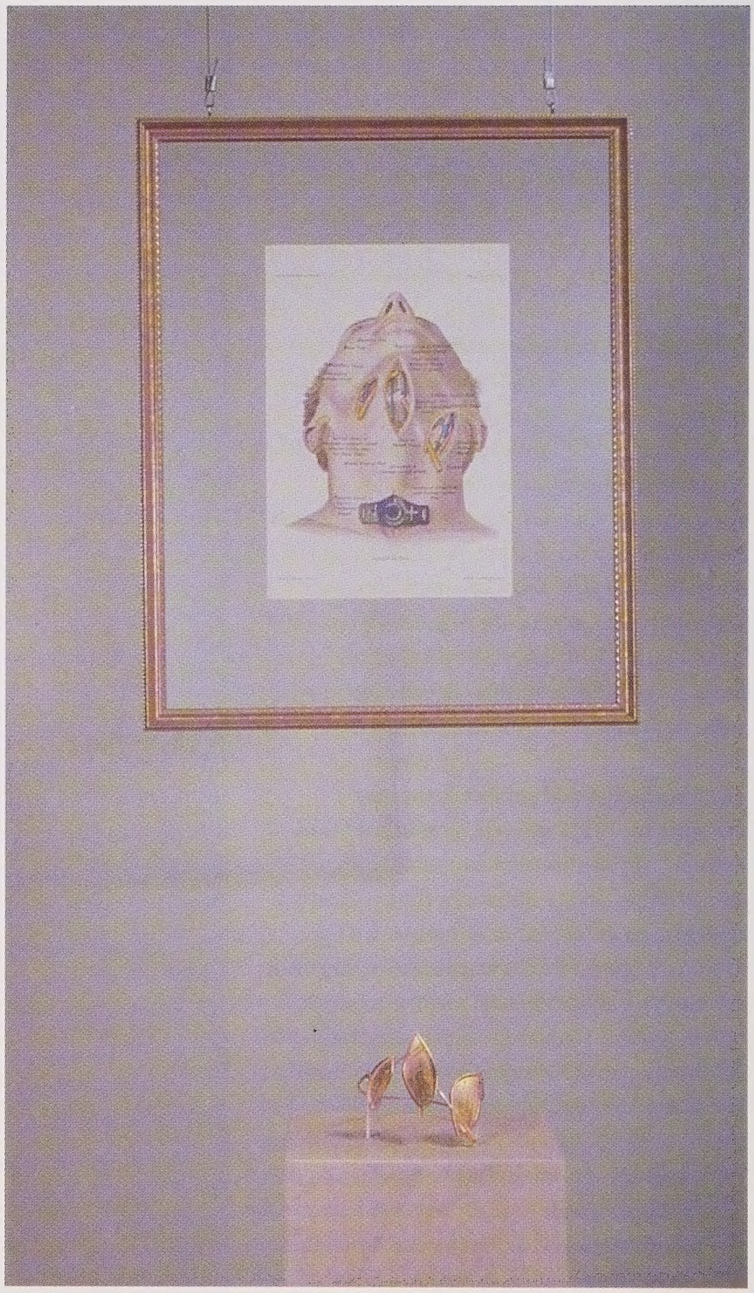
BOTTOM

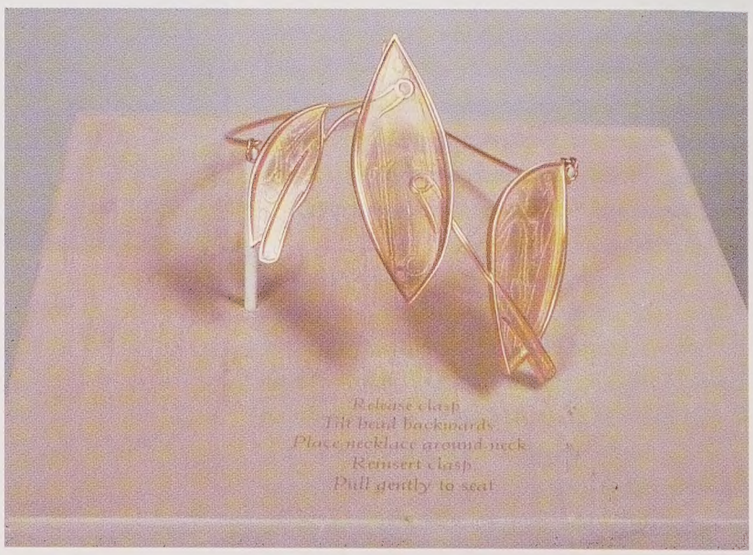
Adornments: Cellulitis of Neck, Necklace, 1994,
(detail of jewelry)
silver, 24k, 3 x 6 x 6"

The installation *Adornments* begins an exploration of the intersection between traditions of adorning the body and the history of the study of that body within a western medical tradition.

The idea behind the installation is to create a viewing room for the images, where they hang discretely – floating, underscoring separateness, (of the body, of the viewer etc.). The five images have been taken from a 1906 book which illustrates surgical procedures. The revealed part of the body, that which lies under the surface and is exposed in the operation by the slice of the knife and the folding back of skin, has been transferred to precious metals (silver, gold) to create objects of adornment to be worn on that specific site of the body. Instead of adornment functioning as a tool of vanity or social information, these pieces display the self-consciousness of mortality and vulnerability and in an ironical manner ornament the physical body with illustrations of its own potential dysfunctions.

Any form of adornment is interesting because it feeds into and carries with it a history of observation and meaning. The juxtaposition of these objects (the wearable ones), with images from a tradition of observation and manipulation (medical) raise questions about the role of gender in both fields. Who wears the jewels, why, and with what resultant meanings? What model or subject has the medical discipline been based upon, and what meaning lies in that?



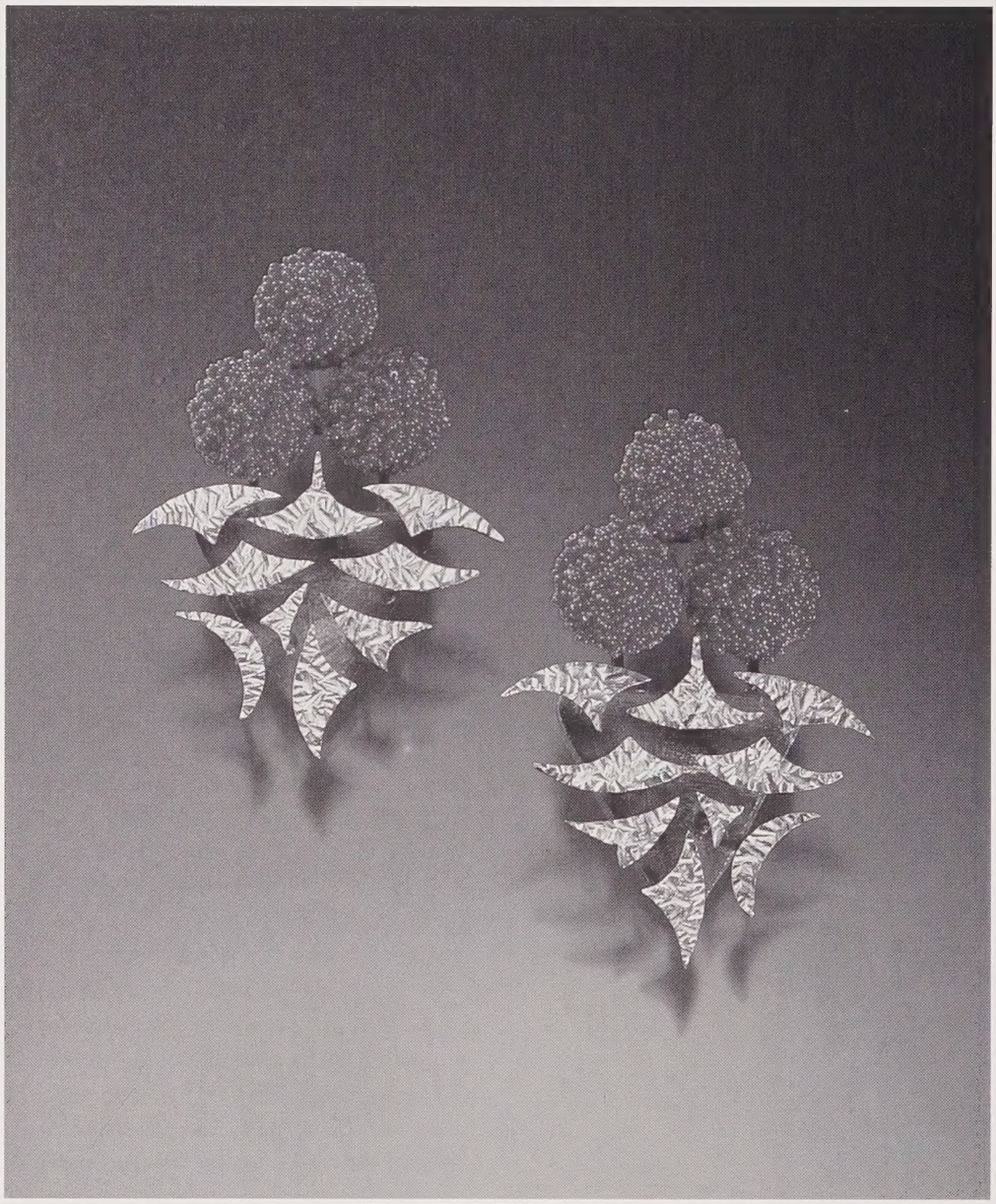


Lynn Whitford
Madison, Wisconsin

The Effect of Good Chemistry II, 1994
copper, painted wood, 15½ x 36 x 10½"

My central visual interest is in the hand-made artifact. I am most drawn to objects which seem to me to represent the simplest, most elegant expression of the idea of a kind of object (e.g., what is the 'essence of' teapot, or wine bottle?). I have used the still life format and other references to drawing and painting to make these solid, real containers seem sometimes flat and abstract, that they might be seen as representative of a class of objects as well as individual characters.

It is important to me to make things which can be appreciated by people who don't read about art (as well as by those who do). It is for that reason that I want the subject matter to be familiar and the surface and/or color to be seductive. I hope that the care with which these simple objects are made and the context into which I put them conveys my attitude towards them, and gives them a kind of weight which justifies their being hand-made in a time and place where such time-consuming activity has been rendered unnecessary. To me they are comforting in a world full of mass produced objects which nobody ever loved or will care about.



Valerie Hector

Chicago, Illinois

LEFT

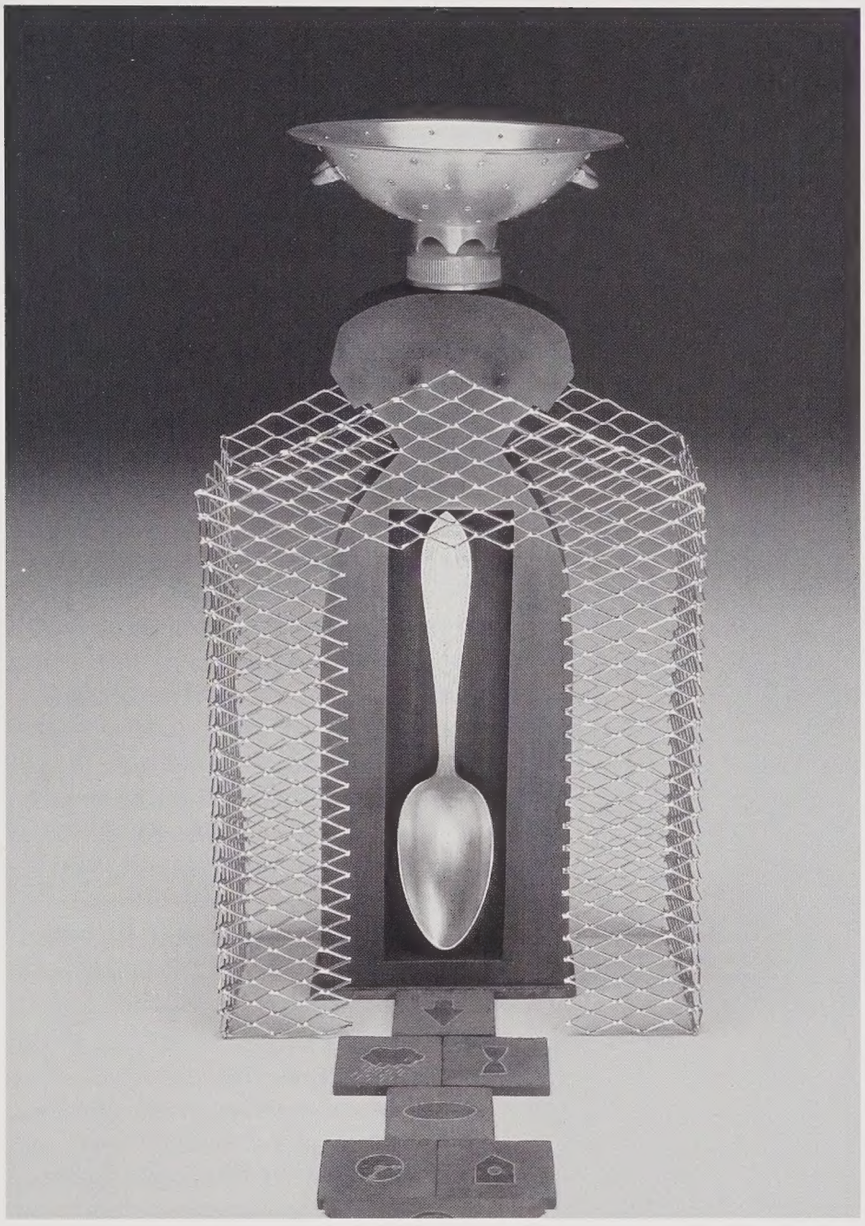
Untitled, Earrings, 1994
antique Venetian glass beads, wood,
18k white gold, sterling, 1¾ x 1 x ½"

COVER

"Ship of Transition" Series, Brooch, 1994
antique Venetian glass beads,
wood, 18k white gold, sterling, 6 x 1½ x ¾"
Photographs by Ralph Gabriner

I see my one-of-a-kind pieces as immensely satisfying experiments, in which I try to combine densely textured, rounded areas of intense color with areas of simply contoured, flat metal shapes suggestive of the sails of a ship, the leaves of a tree, or the shards of a mirror. The beaded areas suggest solidity and stasis, the metal areas: fluidity and movement. I am interested in the tension that emerges from juxtaposing these two materials in a strong, spare structure. I strive for economy of form.

Some of my pieces are inspired by the "ship of transition" motif in Southeast Asian iconography, a motif that appears on objects associated with rites of passage such as marriage or death. The motif signals a period of change following a period of stasis. I adopt this motif in my own work as a quiet reminder of the vicissitudes of the human condition, and of the need for transcendence.



Julia M. Jiannacopoulos
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Searching for the Key to the Fields, (⅔ series), 1994
silver, bronze, slate, aluminum, cubic zirconia, 9 x 7 x 4"

At the core of my work is my constant fascination with the incorporation and transformation of found objects. This process is intended to instill elements of chance or mystery. The found objects have a separate identity defined by strong emotional attachments to the form and function of ordinary useful things. I am interested in exploring the evolution of these elements/artifacts from their primary identifications to the transformed objects. The dissonance that is created by the artifact's original function and its new aesthetic function is essential to the nature of the piece. My interest is in achieving consonance by bestowing a new status and function on the objects. I deliberately choose materials and objects that have specific references, synthesizing new objects with fabricated forms and utilizing elaborate surface treatments.

In my most current work I am attempting to raise consciousness in the viewer through analyzing both common and uncommon fairy tales, popular culture ideologies, beauty ideals, and ideas of traditional female roles. Through the work I hope to name and question the validity of the many intimated messages we receive and to discover whether these attempts to clarify affect our actual experiences. By revivifying objects through elaborate decorative surface treatments and purposefully working in a miniaturized scale I wish to initially engage the viewer on a level of formal relationship. The information provided is without absolute conclusions and my intention is to allow the viewer to participate in the discovery of the meaning and then question the validity, strength, and aesthetic success of these visual investigations.

When private expression is exposed to public interpretation a certain amount of dislocation inevitably results. I hope to classify and define the direction of this process of communication in order to achieve poetry and conceptual simplicity in the relationships I create.

Deborah Lozier
Oakland, California

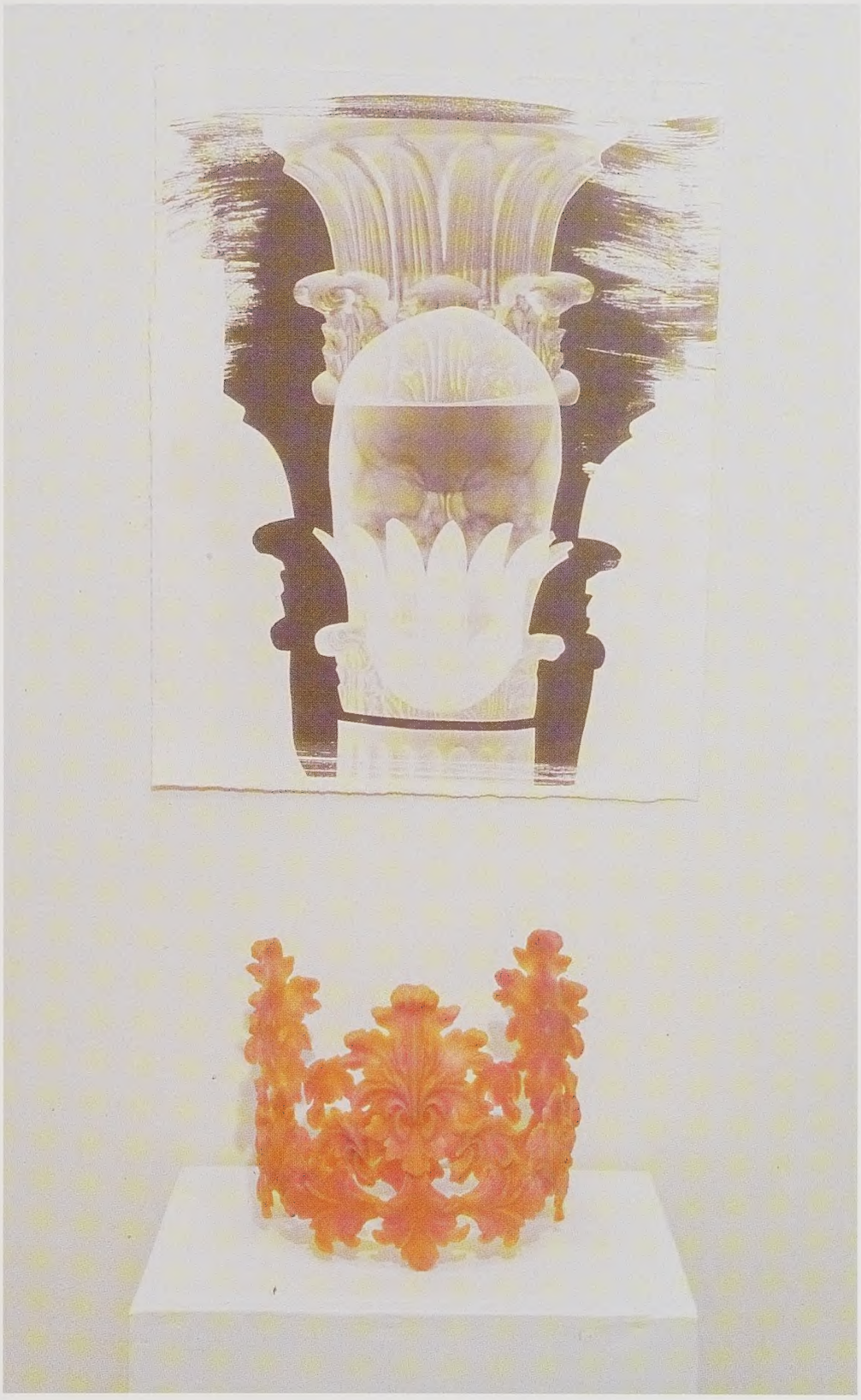
Rectangle Pendant
with Holes for Breathing, 1993
enamel on copper, brass, silver, gold foil
4½ x 2½ x ¾"

I started making jewelry for myself while studying art in college. At that time I felt a slight insecurity about jewelry as a serious art form. "Real" artists made art for arts sake. But as time went on, the jewelry grew into something more then decoration for me. All of the things I could not express in words or other images went into these adornments. Wearing each piece was like being myself from the inside out. There was actually a stage where I felt incomplete without some form of jewelry to fill in the gap. My work has grown and transformed a great deal since those first pieces, but my inspiration has remained rooted in a search for history and identity, both personally and culturally, a common thread which somehow connects what is now to what has been.

It seems that viewers of my work are always asking, "How did you do that?" which has never been my guiding force. I have a vision and a relationship with the materials and we work together to express it. Technical expertise is a by product of the urge to create. But in trying to appease the technically curious, I explain that metal is much more fluid then one would believe and that enamel is much more flexible then she lets on in the beginning. I push them to discover their nature and their limitations and at the same time I discover my own. While working, they often show me a side I never knew existed. It is this mindful acceptance of their natural potential which I believe gives my pieces their spirit.

Susan Ringer Koons
Highland, New York

Architectonic – Part I of III, Headpiece, 1993
salted print on paper, beeswax
print: 16 x 20", crown: 9½" dia. x 7" h.
Photograph by Dan Koons



Ornamental forms have been used throughout the history of metalsmithing. Jewelry, hollowware, etceteras, have borrowed from the vernacular of architectural ornament. Through my work, I want to challenge the viewer to question the use of architectural ornament within the context of jewelry, as it relates to the human form. Through this inquiry, I hope to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between architecture and the body as it relates to the field of metalsmithing.

The origins of classical ornament are deeply rooted in the sacrificial practices of pre-classical Greek religion. The preparation, procession, and actual sacrifice became the structure and ornament of a Greek Temple. Greek society utilized architecture and the manner in which it was ornamented as a purveyor of religious and social information for future generations. As centuries passed, the architecture and ornament of Greek culture was emulated and appropriated at will. The names of the various ornaments and-mouldings suggested sacrificial origins but their forms were so gentrified, that they were rendered meaningless.

As a metalsmith and jeweler, I am embracing the history of architectural ornament, dating to pre-classical Greece. By juxtaposing formal elements of architectural ornament with actual natural forms, I am trying to cause a fracture that will lead to questioning. These ornamental elements are easy to recognize and have an established foothold in our society, but only as ornamental flourishes. Therefore, I am utilizing both the beauty and familiarity of these forms as a subversive tool.

Louis Graveline

Atlanta, Georgia

TOP
Solar Tea, 1992
sterling, bronze, ash, 8½ x 5 x 8"

BOTTOM
Sheer, 1994
golden bronze, sterling, ash, 13¼ x 7 x 7"

I see my work as a blend of plant forms, machine forms, and light, both symbolically and functionally. I love simple, clean, strong shapes with a thickness of edge and an implied visual weight.

I use the vessel form for two reasons. One because it gives me a simple base upon which to apply my ideas. Unlike free form sculpture this gives me a common starting point from which I can push the vessel form in many different directions. The other is the human connection and mythical implications we all share through the vessel or container.

It is also important to me to animate my pieces. One of the elements I respond to in plant forms is the way they thrust themselves toward the sun. A way that I give that kind of energy to my vessels is to put them 'on their toes' so to speak. This frees them from the ground and gives the form a vitality.

Most of my vessels are double bowls. This not only provides visual weight but allows me to play the inner bowl against the outer shell. Lately I've begun to pierce the outer shell revealing the inner bowl.

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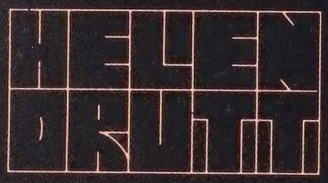

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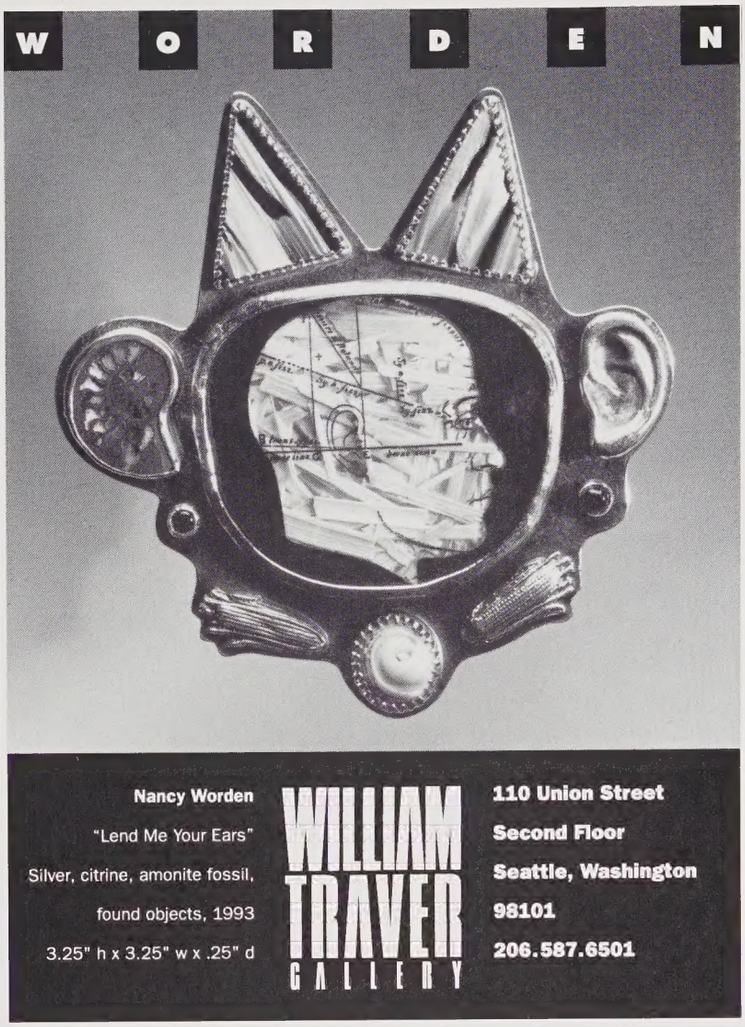

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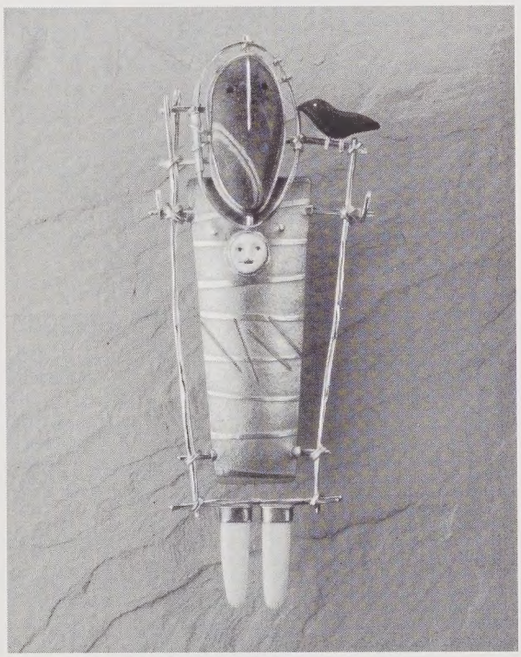

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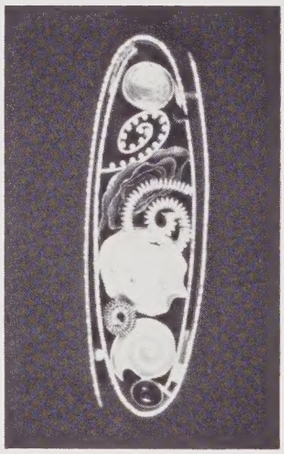

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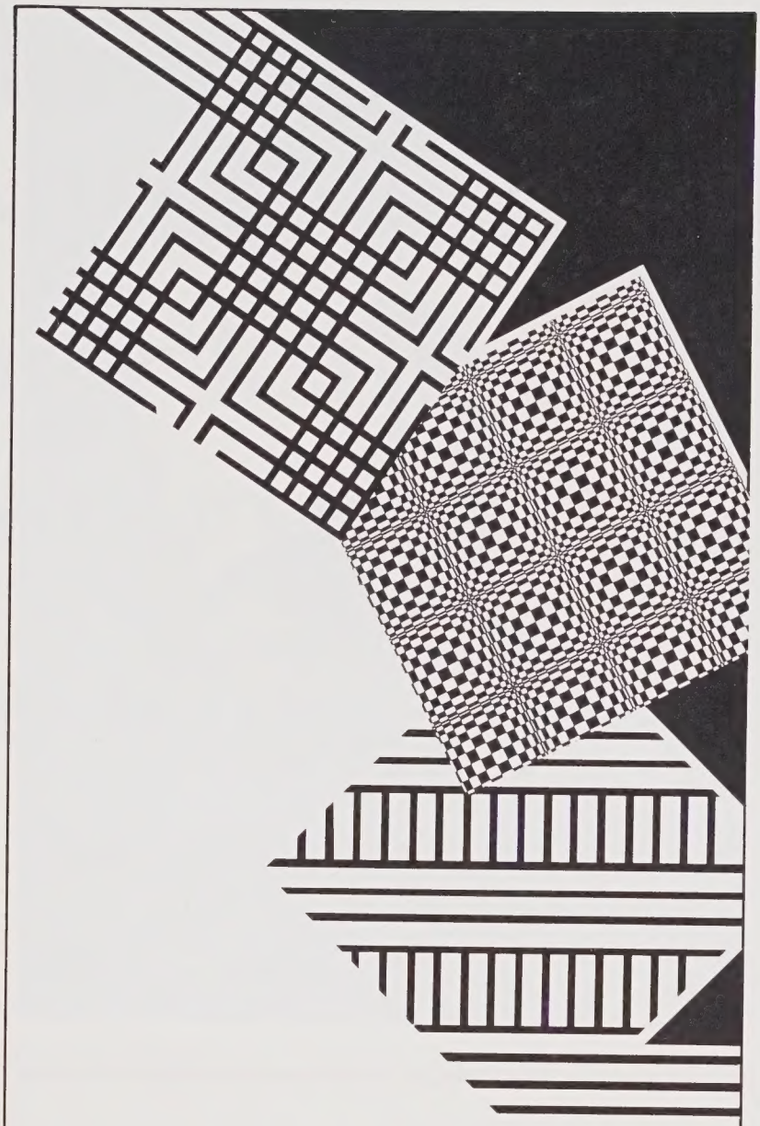

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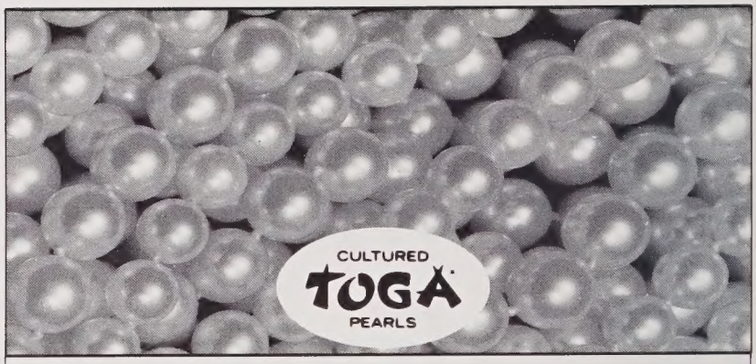

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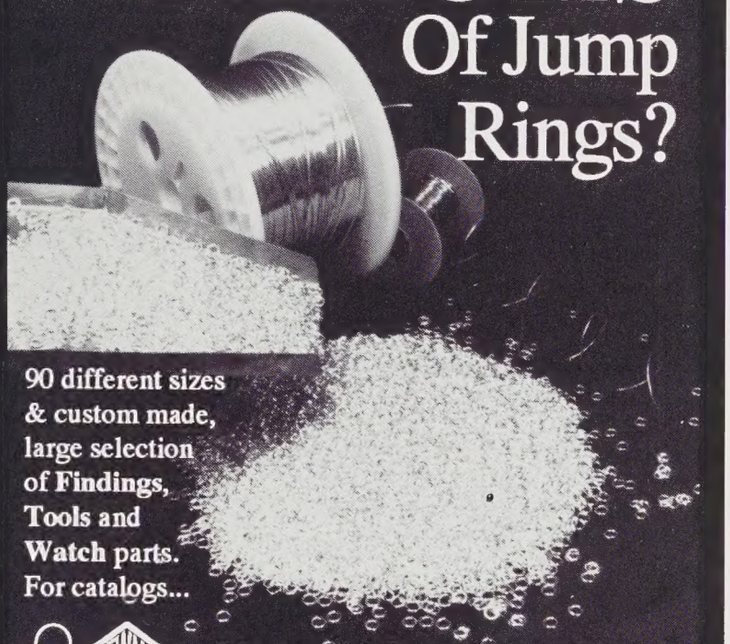

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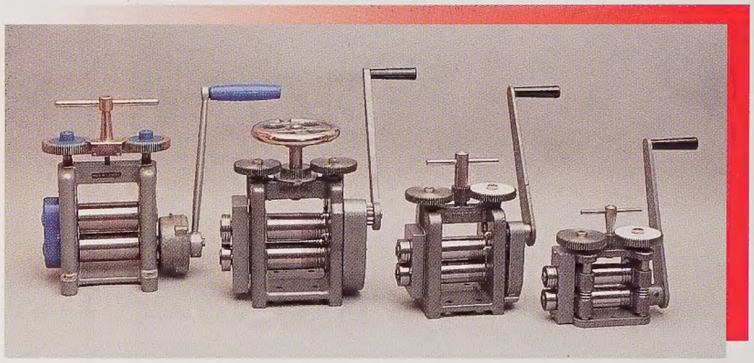

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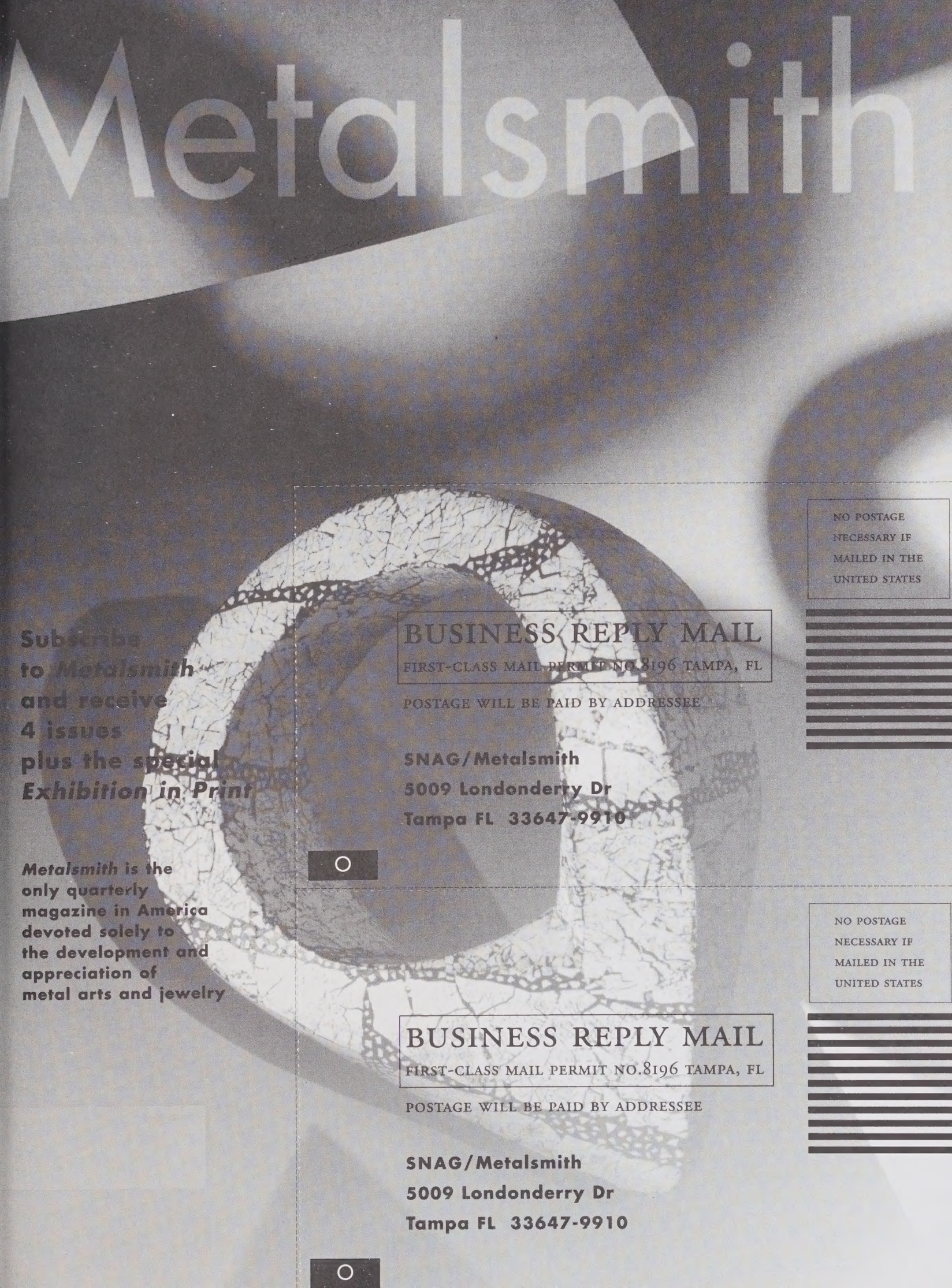

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